

Bosses' 'solution' to power crisis: rate hikes

BY BERNIE SENTER

SAN FRANCISCO—Anger and disgust is growing among workers and farmers in California as rolling blackouts, sharply increased utility bills, and government bailout of the bankrupt utility companies have become answers from corporations and capitalist politicians to an energy crisis spiraling out of control.

California Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein, who closely collaborates with Gov. Gray Davis on the crisis, told the press more rate increases and some form of bailout of the companies must be carried out. "That's the fact, and you have to prepare people for the facts," she said. "There is no politically painless solution. The more you get into this the more clearly you see it."

President George Bush proposed relaxing environmental rules that he claims keep the state's power plants from running full tilt. He dismissed the idea of imposing price caps on energy rates, instead telling CNN, "If there's any environmental regulations that's preventing California from having a 100 percent max output at their plants—as I understand there may be—then we need to relax those regulations."

Enrique Alemán, in a line with 200 other workers applying for union construction electrician apprenticeships January 20, said he thought the "corporations predominate over the people. We consumers don't get the break in electrical rates that big corporations

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Mass march in Havana condemns U.S. policies

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Hundreds of thousands of people marched in Havana January 19 to protest U.S. immigration laws that Washington uses to attack the Cuban revolution. The day before, thousands joined the funeral procession for two teenagers who died while trying to leave the island as stowaways in a jetliner's wheel well—deaths the demonstrators blamed on U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Alberto Vázquez, 17, and Maikel Fonseca, 16, students at a military school, died on Christmas Eve from lack of oxygen and subfreezing temperatures during a flight by a London-bound British Airways jet. One of the bodies was found in a field near London's Gatwick Airport and the other was located still inside the plane's undercarriage. The two youths were seeking to go to the United States and apparently chose the wrong plane.

The Union of Young Communists (UJC) and student organizations sponsored the January 19 march. For three hours, protesters marched past the U.S. Interests Section. Large contingents of students participated, as did workers leaving their workplaces. The lead contingent included Cuban president

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10,000 march in Britain against job cuts in auto

Workers across Europe join actions against GM

BY CAROLINE O'KEEFE
AND ANNE HOWIE

LUTON, England—Ten thousand working people marched here January 20 to protest the decision by General Motors to close its Vauxhall auto plant in this town next year as part of cutting 10,000 jobs at plants across North America and Europe.

The company plans to make 2,000 workers redundant (lay them off) and transfer 1,000 to the IBC truck plant in Luton, which is north of London. In addition, the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) estimates that GM's move will lead to the loss of 8,000 other jobs in the surrounding area. Vauxhall is GM's British subsidiary.

A Europe-wide day of action was called for January 25 by unions at GM-owned plants. Workers at the action here reported plans for plant-gate demonstrations in Portugal, Spain, Germany, and Belgium. Mass meetings were held at the two Vauxhall plants in the country in mid-January to discuss the action.

Workers and their families from across Britain turned out for the January 20 rally, including 250 from the Vauxhall plant in Ellesmere Port, near Liverpool. This was particularly important to James Nolan, who works at the Luton plant. "Workers at the two Vauxhall plants have not always stood together. Now we are," he said. "For them to show us solidarity is first class."

Hundreds of workers came in buses from the Rover auto plant in Longbridge, Birmingham. Workers employed at Land Rover in Solihull, BMW in Cowley, and IBC in Luton also joined the march.



Militant/Pat Shaw

Thousands marched January 20 against job cuts announced by General Motors, including unionists from Germany, Belgium, and Spain. Above, workers from Bochum, Germany, carry banner reading, "Fight for every job, Luton-Bochum, worldwide."

A contingent of workers from a parts warehouse in Luton carried a banner reading, "Vauxhall Aftersales Says No To Closure." Carel Simon said they were there because "if the Luton plant goes, the parts will be next." Underscoring the devastating effect the closure would have on the town as

a whole, he said, "Luton is an industrial town. No cars, no Luton."

Simon described how workers at the warehouse walked off the job when they heard the closure announcement. "We didn't hear about the closure from the company—

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Five-year lockout ends at Crown refinery

BY DEAN COOK
AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

PASADENA, Texas—Ending a five-year lockout, workers at the Crown Central Petroleum refinery here voted January 17 to accept a contract negotiated between the company and Local 4-227 of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE).

The agreement enables the union workers to begin returning to work over the next few months.

The workers at Crown voted 72-56 by mail-in ballot to accept the contract after attending a union meeting where the contract was discussed. Workers had voted at a union meeting in October to reject a similar con-

tract.

The agreement covers about 160 bargaining unit jobs. The bulk of the maintenance work once performed by union workers will now be performed by temporary workers employed by contractors, as will warehouse, safety repair, and material handler jobs. Other job losses can be attributed to job consolidations in operations.

The contract rejected in October required workers to take physicals and a series of written tests before returning to work. Failure of any of the tests could have resulted in being fired.

While the new contract still requires workers to take the tests, the penalty for failure is removed, with the exception of the

physical, which workers must still pass. For those who don't, the contract provides minimal medical leave benefits. The earlier contract proposal did not.

The contract also provides wage increases, but from the 1996 base—when the lockout began—which puts the workers four years behind in wage increases. They will receive a 4.4 percent raise immediately and another 3.5 percent increase in

seven months.

Phyllis Miller, a worker at Crown for 20 years and a leader of the fight, said she didn't like the terms of the contract. "But I'm ready for it to be over," she added, "although I'll probably be one of the people who won't go back to work."

Miller expressed the concern that Crown bosses would use the new language in the contract to "weed out" unionists they did not want back in the plant.

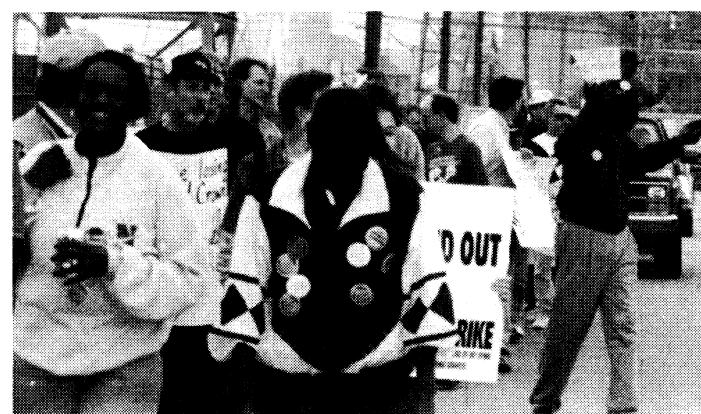
Workers will begin returning to work in early February, in groups of 20 over a period of months. Some workers will be retrained on the jobs they held prior to the lockout, while others, due to the contracting out of jobs, will be required to learn new jobs.

Of the 252 workers locked out in 1996, about 90 have since resigned or retired, many due to economic hardships. Crown changed the rules of its employee 401(k) savings plan shortly after the lockout began, making it extremely difficult for workers to withdraw their money. Many workers were forced to resign or retire in order to gain access to these funds. Some resigned as part of preemployment conditions for other jobs.

Many of the remaining workers have found jobs at other chemical plants and refineries or in other industries and professions.

In the months leading up to the lockout, the unionists organized to resist the company's antiunion attacks. In December 1995, in response to the company's sweep-

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Militant/Phil Duzinski

Union supporters march Jan. 18, 1996, to present petition with demands to Crown Petroleum bosses. After a five-year lockout, agreement enables union workers to return to work.

Students defend affirmative action at Univ. of Michigan

BY ELLEN BERMAN

ANN ARBOR, Michigan—Martin Luther King Day marked the latest in a series of actions in defense of affirmative action that have been organized by students at the University of Michigan here since last fall. After two days of workshops some 250 students held a march and rally January 15.

Students have scored a victory by winning the right to present, independent from the university administration, their reasons for opposing moves to eliminate affirmative action programs in the trial of *Barbara Gutter v. Lee Bollinger et al.* The suit, which opened in U.S. District Court in Detroit January 16, challenges the university's affirmative action policies.

Joining the University of Michigan students at the Martin Luther King Day march and rally were two busloads of high school students from Detroit. As the demonstrators marched down the middle of the street, chanting "Equal Quality Education, We

won't take resegregation," and "They say Jim Crow, We say hell no!" many of the high school students broke away to walk up to storefront windows and wave their hand-lettered signs enthusiastically at the customers inside.

Metse Marang, a University of Michigan sophomore and former student at Detroit's Cass Tech, one of the participating high schools, said she came to the demonstration to "show people that students do care about what's going on and to show other students they need to be involved. Affirmative action is still necessary in this society." Marang added, "We have to address the social inequalities that exist in K through 12 education in cities like Detroit. Blacks and Latinos get underfunded schooling and there is a lack of resources at the Detroit public schools."

The Washington, D.C.-based Center for Individual Rights (CIR), which successfully argued against affirmative action at the University of Texas law school in 1996, is representing several students who are white in the lawsuits. Filed in 1997, one suit is against the Law School and the other against the undergraduate College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Both claim minority students with lower qualifications were accepted at the school instead of the white applicants.

The university is defending its affirmative action policies by arguing that diversity is necessary for students to get a good education. On December 13, the U.S. District Court ruled without a trial to uphold the university's inclusion of race among criteria for undergraduate admissions. The trial that began on January 16 is the one pertaining to the Law School.

For the first time, students supporting affirmative action will be allowed to present their case in the courtroom. This group of "defendant-intervenors" includes current University of Michigan law students and prospective applicants, as well as students from schools in Texas and California, who will describe the difficulties they face in states where affirmative action programs



Militant photos by Ilona Gersh

Above and left, students at the University of Michigan, joined by high school students, hold January 15 protest against attacks on affirmative action.

have been declared unconstitutional.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled in favor of the students who felt that the university's own defense solely on the basis of diversity would not address the importance of affirmative action as a remedy for past and present discrimination.

The ruling marks the first time the courts have allowed minority advocates to represent themselves directly in an affirmative action case. For the students to be permitted into the case, they had to prove that the university, as a defendant, would not adequately represent their stake in the case's outcome.

Miranda Massie, one of the lawyers representing the students, applauded the decision to allow their testimony. She pointed out, "It has been activism by students—always—that has been responsible for the expansion of opportunity at the University of Michigan.... It has never been the university acting on its own. The students' success is of historic significance because the case is at the center of a national student movement that has the capacity to change the social context of affirmative action."

The General Motors Corp. also filed a brief supporting the University of Michigan's minority admissions programs. About 23 percent of GM's 193,000 U.S. employees are minorities.

In an article in *The Michigan Daily*, the University of Michigan student newspaper, Massie credited student activism for swinging public opinion to the side of affirmative action. When the suits were initially filed, she said, it seemed like CIR would prevail. Now the "tide is starting to turn and that is

largely due to the students on the U of M campus."

According to the *Detroit Free Press*, of the 38,000 graduates and undergraduates enrolled at the university in the fall semester of 2000, 13 percent were "underrepresented minorities, including 7.8 percent Black, 4.3 percent Hispanic, and 0.6 percent Native American. The class of 2000 at the law school is 367 students, 28 percent of whom are minorities.

In addition to the activities on campus, students were encouraged to attend as much of the trial as possible to show their continuing support for affirmative action. About 25 people picketed outside the courtroom on the morning of the trial's opening day. The courtroom was so full of spectators that people had to rotate in and out to give everyone a chance to view the proceedings.

Lee Bollinger, president of the University of Michigan, was quoted in *The Michigan Daily* saying this "could be the first step in a long journey culminating in a U.S. Supreme Court decision on the fate of affirmative action in higher education." In 1996 the University of Texas eliminated affirmative action, and the passage of Proposition 209 in California ended the use of race as a factor for admissions in that state's university system. A similar referendum in the state of Washington in 1998 also restricted the use of race as a factor in public institutions.

Students plan to continue organizing protests throughout the trial, which is expected to last about three weeks.

Ellen Berman is a member of United Auto Workers Local 157.

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Washington admits 1950 massacre of Koreans

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In face of new revelations by U.S. soldiers of a massacre of civilians during the Korean War and protests by survivors of the atrocity, President William Clinton acknowledged January 11 for the first time that Washington's troops had indeed shot down Koreans fleeing the war zone. Clinton, saying he "deeply regrets" the killing of those who were trapped under a railroad bridge near the village of No Gun Ri in 1950, refused to apologize or pin blame on U.S. military brass.

The "yearlong investigation into this incident has served as a painful reminder of the tragedies of war," Clinton stated. He claimed the U.S. government has "been unable to determine precisely the events that occurred at No Gun Ri," only that an "unconfirmed number" were killed there. U.S. officials say they can find no record of "written orders" to kill civilians in Korea.

The White House also rejected offering any financial compensation to survivors or relatives of those slaughtered. Instead the Pentagon will spend \$1 million to construct a memorial to "innocent" Korean civilians killed in the war and \$750,000 for scholarships for students to attend U.S. and Korean universities.

An hour after Clinton's announcement, survivors of the No Gun Ri massacre and their supporters rejected his statement, saying Washington was trying to "shirk its legal responsibility." They said they would refuse to accept any scholarship money not earmarked for survivors. They noted that



Korean students protesting in Seoul January 12 against Clinton statement on 1950 slaughter of Korean civilians, in which he refused to blame U.S. military officers.

accounts from U.S. veterans and references in military logs show that orders were given to fire on all civilians to stop them from fleeing along with north Korean troops who were supposedly disguised as refugees.

"This massacre did not take place in one short period of time. It went on for three nights and four days," said Chung Koo Do,

head of the No Gun Ri survivors organization. "The American Army and Air Force took action in a carefully coordinated joint operation. It was not an incidental occurrence."

Chung Eun Yong, an 80-year-old survivor of the attack, added, "This is not enough for the massacre of—over 60 hours—of 400

Meat packers in Vancouver reject concessions

BY DERRICK O'KEEFE

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—"We can't accept this proposal. We can't accept any concessions," said John Juatco in reaction to the latest contract proposal from Fletcher's Fine Foods. "The cost of living in Vancouver is very high and the work is very hard." Juatco is one of 400 meat packers locked out since August after they voted 96 percent in favor of rejecting Fletcher's steep concession demands, including a 40 percent wage cut.

The new proposal by the bosses to United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1518 still calls for big concessions, including a permanent two-tier wage scale with significantly lower rates for new workers. For example, under the previous contract wages for a laborer rise during three years service to Can\$16.50 (Can\$1=US 67 cents, subsequent figures are all in Canadian dollars). The company is now proposing a laborer hired before the lockout top out at \$13.20. New hires would start at \$9.50 and get a raise to \$10.75 after one year and remain at that rate until the end of the contract. The company is also demanding the contract expire in 2007, with no wage hikes except for laborers who get an increase after one year of service.

"The workers don't like this new proposal, it is no good," explained Coconut, a Vietnamese worker who has been at Fletcher's since 1981. This was a common sentiment on the picket line. "I don't agree with the two-tier system" said Juatco, a meat cutter. "Somebody new could only get up to \$10.75 and then wouldn't get a wage increase for the next six years. You can't live on that." Victor Brusovenanu, a maintenance worker, said, "We should be going for a 10 percent wage increase, not a wage cut. They locked us out. The cost of living keeps going up, not down."

The company's proposal includes two "buyouts." To qualify, workers who are locked out must return to the job for 90 days, at which point they will receive the buyout by either resigning outright or going down to the lower, tier two wage rates.

Several workers noted that the fact that the company has made this latest proposal shows that they want to keep the plant open and resume production. Since 1998, when the company sought to reopen the last contract and push through concessions, the bosses have threatened to close the plant or significantly reduce operations. Coconut explained that this tactic by the company has been used in previous contract negotiations as well. "Since 1987 or 1988 they've been saying that they'll close down."

While talks are ongoing, the union has agreed to the company's request to postpone

its leafleting campaign, which urges consumers to boycott Fletcher's products. The leaflets that members have been distributing at local grocery stores also urge consumers not to buy products from Superior, Hallmark, or United Poultry, three companies owned by the Pollon group, British Columbia's largest poultry processor.

More than 200 UFCW Local 1518 members at Superior Poultry in Coquitlam near

here have been on strike for six months, fighting for a first contract. The starting wage at the chicken processing facility is the provincial minimum, which the government recently increased to \$7.60 an hour from \$7.15.

Derrick O'Keefe is a laid-off member of UFCW Local 2000. Joe Young, a meat packer, contributed to this article.

Communist League launches campaign in Quebec

BY SYLVIE CHARRON

MONTREAL—The Communist League in Canada has announced Michel Prairie as its candidate in the spring provincial by-election in the Montreal riding of Mercier. Prairie, who spoke at a Militant Labor Forum here January 19, is a member of the Communist League's Central Committee and is editor of the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*.

"My campaign," said Prairie, "presents a working-class voice in this election and builds solidarity with working people—from the 1,250 nickel miners on strike against Falconbridge in Sudbury, Ontario, to the more than 600 meatpacking workers on strike or locked out in the Vancouver area by Superior Poultry and Fletcher's Fine Foods; from the Palestinians fighting for their homeland to the workers and farmers in Cuba defending their socialist revolution."

"An important aspect of my campaign," continued Prairie, "is discussing on picket lines, at plant gates, and in working-class districts how working people can use our organizations—the trade unions—to defend ourselves against the dramatic impact of the slowdown in the capitalist economy, such as layoffs, the energy crisis on the U.S. West Coast, and continuing assaults by the bosses and their governments against our working and living conditions. We will discuss with workers and farmers the need in face of this crisis to organize a revolutionary struggle by millions of working people to replace the current capitalist government in Ottawa with one of their own."

Mercier riding is at the center of a controversy in Quebec around anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant remarks made in mid-December by Parti Quebecois (PQ) figure Yves Michaud, who until recently had been seeking the party's nomination as candidate in the by-election. The "Michaud affair" was cited by Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard as one element in his surprise decision to resign January 11.

Bouchard also stated that his efforts at winning popular support for Quebec sover-

ignty had failed, claiming Quebecois were indifferent in the face of continuing federal government attacks on their rights.

"The capitalist media has jumped on Bouchard's resignation statement to say that the Quebecois no longer want independence," said Prairie. But polls continue to reveal that overall popular support for independence among Quebecois remains unchanged."

"This sentiment is fueled by the resistance to continuing national oppression of the Quebecois within the Canadian capitalist state," said Prairie. He cited several examples of the national oppression of the Quebecois, including continuing gaps in wages, health care, and education between those who speak French and those who speak English, both inside Quebec and in the rest of Canada.

"Canada's ruling class will never allow Quebec to leave 'the nation' peacefully," he added. "The fight for independence can only

be won in a revolutionary struggle in the streets and the factories, not by referendums or negotiations with Canada's rulers, contrary to what the PQ has been promoting."

The Militant Labor Forum in Montreal was attended by 17 people. The next day 28 workers and youth turned out to hear Prairie in Toronto. "It is in the interests of all working people in Canada to support the fight for Quebec independence as the way to forge our unity in a common struggle against the capitalist exploiters, to establish a workers and farmers government, and join the international fight for socialism," he said.

One participant at the Toronto meeting told about the experience of a *Militant* sales team at York University earlier that day. Several students attending a conference were attracted by a placard at their literature table supporting Quebec independence. A group of Quebecois students stopped and asked to have their picture taken in front of the placard.



Communist League candidate Michel Prairie at January 19 forum in Montreal

The truth about the U.S.-led war on Iraq

Printed below are excerpts from *New International* no. 7, which features the talk "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," given in March 1991 by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes. The first excerpt is from the introduction, "In this issue." The second is from the "Opening Guns" talk. Copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

The six-week bombardment and one-hundred-hour invasion of Iraq by Washington and its allies devastated the country and its peoples. In a land that had been semi-industrialized, the assault left millions homeless, hungry, and vulnerable to disease. It was one of the most massive, cold-blooded slaughters in modern history. Economic dislocation now stalks Turkey as well as Kuwait and Jordan, coming down hardest on the toilers. Environmental catastrophe has been spread even further. In addition, the strangulation of Iraq through economic blockade, now entering its tenth month, prevents even medicine, foodstuffs, and agricultural implements from being imported. Acute malnutrition, along with cholera and other epidemic horrors, are beginning to threaten the region.

Washington launched its war drive in early August 1990 with an air, sea, and ground blockade. The initial ships and aircraft as well as the first troops and war matériel were dispatched to the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding waters. In a little more than six months, these became a half-million-strong mechanized and armored invasion force. The U.S. rulers' goal was to impose a virtual protectorate in Baghdad, a reliable regime subservient to U.S. imperialism; secure greater control over oil reserves in the Gulf; shift the relationship of forces against the region's toilers, especially the Palestinian people whose *intifada* and internationalist dignity remain the biggest thorn in Washington's side; and in the process stabilize and strengthen pro-U.S. regimes in the region. In pursuing these aims, the U.S. capitalist class sought to use its military might to deal economic and political blows to its imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan.

U.S. did not fight a war at all

Far from the stunning war victory proclaimed by President George Bush on February 27, however, the massive U.S. armored invasion force did not fight a war at all. Instead, allied imperialist forces on the land and from the air and sea conducted a militarized slaughter of tens of thousands of individual Iraqis—workers and peasants in tattered uniforms—attempting to flee Kuwait and return to Iraq. The Saddam Hussein regime had abandoned them in foxholes and trenches without air cover, stripped of all but a skeletal command structure, with minimal communications and few provisions. Despite its grab to control oil, land, and waterways in Kuwait, Baghdad never intended to fight a war against U.S. imperialism.

Nor has Washington achieved its political aims in the region. The capitalist regimes and imperialist order in the Gulf and Midwest are more unstable today than before August 1990. The imposition of a "solution" to the Palestinian "question" short of justice for the Palestinians continues to evade the imperialists. Far from becoming closer and warmer, the U.S. and Israeli rulers continue to diverge in their policy interests. Washington has failed so far to oust Saddam Hussein and impose a regime more to its liking. Growing numbers of working people in the United States are questioning the purpose of a war that, as they are now learning, destroyed the Iraqi people's modern means of life support and culminated in two massacres: one in late February against defenseless Iraqi soldiers fleeing Kuwait—carried out by Washington and its allies, with the complicity of Baghdad; the other, in March, against the Kurds and Shiites in northern and southern Iraq—carried out by Baghdad with the complicity of Washington.

The U.S. government stands guilty before the world for making refugees of some two million Kurds and others who fled Baghdad's murderous assault. But Washington and its allies have refused to open their borders to the Kurds and other refugees seeking asylum.

Having won a military "victory," U.S.



Aftermath of U.S. bombing of road from Kuwait City to Basra, February 1991. "This slaughter," says Jack Barnes, "ranks among the great atrocities of modern warfare."

imperialism is breaking its teeth in the attempt to achieve its political goals. This outcome has opened wide tactical divisions within U.S. ruling circles over the Bush administration's policy decisions in the Gulf. The "Vietnam syndrome" has been reinforced, not pushed back as Bush initially boasted at the end of February. It will be slightly harder, not easier, for the U.S. rulers to mobilize public support for their next military adventure. It will be slightly more difficult for union bureaucrats and other misleaders, echoing the wishes of the government and corporations, to get away with demanding that working people and the oppressed accept sacrifices, defer strikes, or postpone protest actions for patriotic reasons. More political space can be taken—right now—by working-class opponents of imperialism and war.

The war and its immediate consequences did not resolve, but rather exacerbated the economic and political contradictions in the United States and worldwide that increasingly drove Washington to use its military might in the first place. The war accelerated the rivalry between Washington and other imperialist powers and increased the likelihood of sharpening conflicts among them. Neither the German nor Japanese imperialist ruling classes were politically able to send units to participate in the allied assault. For the first time since the buildup to World War II, however, the war in the Gulf put Bonn and Tokyo on an accelerated course toward using their military forces abroad to advance their respective state interests.

March toward war, crisis

Working people around the world today face an unstable prewar situation, not a stabilized postwar period. Washington's assault on Iraq was the first of the wars that will mark the segment of the historic curve of capitalist development announced by the October 1987 crash of stock markets from New York to Tokyo, from Bonn to Hong Kong. Capitalism today is marching not only toward more wars but at the same time stumbling toward a depression and world social crisis. We will see deepening capitalist economic dislocation within which a partial shock or breakdown—a collapse of the banking system, a steep recession in a major industrial country, an inflationary explosion, a massive crop failure—could trigger a collapse of world industrial production.

With no end in sight, fear is growing that

the recession in North America, Britain, France, New Zealand, and Australia could become both as deep as the 1981–82 downturn (or deeper) and worldwide in scope, as happened in 1974–75. It is precipitating the kind of pressures on capitalist profits that further intensify interimperialist competition. As a result, the employers will try to take more out of the hides of the hundreds of millions of debt slaves in the semicolonial world. They will drive harder at home to lower living standards and step up the pace and intensity of production inside mines, mills, and factories. They will extend their efforts to chip away at rights and democratic liberties and seek to weaken and restrict the space open to the working class and its organizations for independent political action.

Washington's war against Iraq was thus an announcement, a loud and clear one, of the conflicts that lie ahead as the imperialist rulers follow the historic logic of their declining world system of exploitation and oppression—a line of march that, willy-nilly, moves toward World War III.

For working people the world over, for vanguard working-class fighters, and for that section of the working-class vanguard who are communists, these political assessments are decisive in charting a course to advance the historic line of march of our class. The future of humanity depends on the independent political organization of the world's toilers to resist the devastation the rulers seek to impose on us. It depends on our capacity to fight, to win revolutionary battles, and to take war-making powers out of the hands of the exploiters and oppressors by establishing governments of the workers and farmers. Whether or not the unthinkable horrors of a third imperialist world slaughter are unleashed will be decided by mighty class battles and their outcome in the coming years. It is in our hands, the hands of the workers of the world, to prevent the calamities that imperialism is marching, and stumbling, toward. We will have our chance.

❖

BY JACK BARNES

The U.S.-organized carnage against the Iraqi people is among the most monstrous in the history of modern warfare. "Is" not "was." Death and dislocation continue today, as does the imperialists' culpability for them.

We may never know the actual num-

bers of toilers killed in Iraq and Kuwait during the six weeks of incessant allied air and sea bombardment and the murderous one-hundred-hour invasion launched by Washington February 24, 1991. But the one common media estimate that as many as 150,000 human beings were slaughtered is conservative, if anything. Just think about the impact of a massacre of that magnitude on the less than 19 million people of Iraq. Compare the blow of this number of deaths, and many additional maimings, and the relatively short period over which they mounted, with the impact many of you can remember in the United States, a country of 250 million, of the 47,000 U.S. combat deaths during Washington's nearly ten-year—not ten-week—war to prevent Vietnam's reunification.

Concentrated bloodletting

The most concentrated single bloodletting was organized by the U.S. command in the final forty-eight hours of the invasion, as Iraqi soldiers fled Kuwait along the roads to Basra. While publicly denying that Iraqi forces were withdrawing from Kuwait, Washington ordered that tens of thousands of fleeing Iraqi soldiers be targeted for wave after wave of bombing, strafing, and shelling. These were people who were putting up no resistance, many with no weapons, others with rifles packed in bedrolls, leaving in cars, trucks, carts, and on foot. Many civilians from Iraq, Kuwait, and immigrant workers from other countries were killed at the same time as they tried to flee.

The U.S. armed forces bombed one end of the main highway from Kuwait city to Basra, sealing it off. They bombed the other end of the highway and sealed it off. They positioned mechanized artillery units on the hills overlooking it. And then, from the air and from the land they simply massacred every living thing on the road. Fighter bombers, helicopter gunships, and armored battalions poured merciless firepower on traffic jams backed up for as much as twenty miles. When the traffic became gridlocked, the B-52s were sent in for carpet bombing.

The killing zone

That was the killing zone. You couldn't move down the road. You couldn't move up the road. You couldn't move off the road. You couldn't surrender, wave a white flag, or give yourself up. The allied forces simply kept bombing and firing—at every person, jeep, truck, car, and bicycle. One allied air force officer called it a "turkey shoot." Others called it the biggest of the "cockroach hunts." That's the American way—carpet bombed, and shot in the back...

The imperialist coalition and the Baghdad regime both have their own reasons for covering up the truth about the bloodbath. As a result, we'll never know how many people died in the massacre. In late March Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked by a reporter to provide an estimate of the number of Iraqis killed as a result of combined allied bombing and ground operations. Showing a little of the true face of imperial arrogance and racism, Powell replied: "It's really not a number I'm terribly interested in."

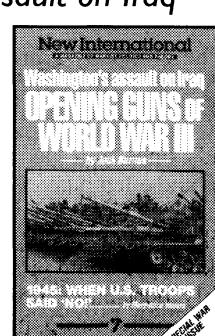
from *Pathfinder*

Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq

Jack Barnes

The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. Also includes "Communist Policy in Wartime as well as in Peacetime" by Mary-Alice Waters. \$12.00



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Workers in Alabama protest rate hike, shutoff of gas heat

BY JACOB FOX

SANDUSKY, Alabama—Many homes in this and neighboring coal-mining communities west of Birmingham had gas heat shut off for nonpayment in December and January, in the midst of an unusually cold winter.

In response, more than 200 residents of the area packed the Sandusky Community Center on a rainy night January 18 to discuss these cutoffs and the skyrocketing gas bills they have received.

"My bill in December from the Graysville gas system was \$345, compared to my average previous winter bill of \$55," said Tony Ladu, a local small businessman who called the meeting. "That's more than a 500 percent increase. And that's not unusual. For many of us, the choice is between eating or staying warm."

The Graysville gas system serves 10,000 households in Graysville, Sandusky, Adamsville, and other communities in this area. The utility is run by Graysville mayor Wayne Tuggle and the city council, which acts as a board of directors.

While most large coal mines in these towns have been closed for many years, a couple of smaller pits still operate. Many who live in this area come from long-standing mining families and some still work in the industry. Others commute the short distance to jobs in Birmingham.

Early in the meeting, Ladu turned the floor over to Mayor Tuggle, who had ordered the cutoff in early January of every customer 90 days or more in arrears. Tuggle presented a lengthy justification of his actions, claiming the system would go bankrupt if power wasn't cut off and rates increased. The gas system was forced to take out a \$1 million loan to help pay its gas supplier because of slow collections, he said.

"We haven't raised gas prices since 1993," said Tuggle. "Why have gas prices skyrocketed? We just don't know. There isn't a shortage of gas." Tuggle has called for a federal investigation of the increases in natural gas prices from major suppliers.

Local residents, Black and white, lined up at the microphone to address the issue and pose questions to Tuggle. Many different explanations were offered as to the cause of the rate hikes and shutoffs—from price-gouging by energy companies to corruption in the Graysville system.

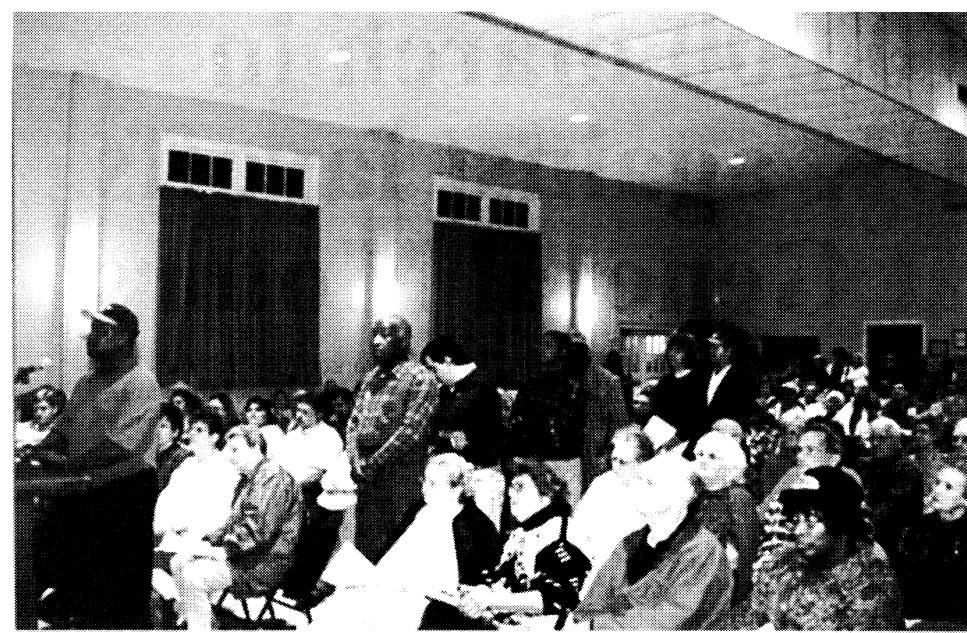
James McCray, 68, a retired maintenance worker and inspector for Alabama Gas Co., which provides gas to Birmingham and other cities, pointed to existing maintenance

problems in the Graysville system as a contributing cause. "I know of small gas leaks that have gone uncorrected for more than three years," he said. "Do we wait until something blows up and kills somebody?"

McCray decried the cutoff of power to those on fixed incomes. "What's going to happen to the poor and the elderly? Do we just tell them it's too bad?" he asked.

Tuttle said programs exist to help those over 75 years old pay their fuel bills, but offered few specifics. He urged meeting attendees to write to their Congressional representatives to protest the high price of natural gas.

Jimmie Hughes, 45, a postal worker, took the floor to question the accuracy of the gas bills sent out. "A lot of times they don't come out to read the meter, they just estimate," he said. Dominique Cook questioned why Graysville's emergency reserve wasn't utilized. Tuttle had said this supply could only



Militant/Dave Wulp

January 18 meeting near Graysville, Alabama, protesting gas rate raises by Graysville Gas and Water Company. The CEO of the utility is also the mayor of Graysville.

be used in an emergency shutoff of the gas flow to the system. "My bill increased by 300 percent. Isn't this an emergency?" Cook asked.

Two days before the meeting, the Graysville City Council passed a one cent sales tax increase and voted to cut city services to recover an expected \$200,000 rev-

enue shortfall this year, mostly stemming from the gas system. The city library, ball field lights, and legal services were cut back. Also closed was the community center.

Jeanne FitzMaurice, a former coal miner and resident of nearby Ensley, called for immediate relief for those with power cut off

Continued on Page 14

Big-business forces press for nuclear power

BY BOB KELLER

SAN FRANCISCO—As working people face the third week of an acute energy crisis in California, the first salvos are being fired in an attempt to push back public opposition to nuclear power plants and to weaken environmental restrictions to oil drilling and clean air regulations.

Government officials, nuclear power proponents, and opinion columnists in big business dailies are floating trial balloons to gauge the receptivity to "expand and diversify energy resources" in light of the rolling blackouts and "Stage 3" energy emergencies that have become a regular feature of life here.

Prominent nuclear power advocate Denis Beller spoke to a meeting of the Northern California Section of the American Nuclear Society January 17, which was covered by the *Oakland Tribune* and several television stations. "Nuclear power is needed: for workers, the public, and environment. It's needed to fight energy poverty," said Beller, a nuclear engineer researcher at Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico. He maintained that the U.S. was entering a "nuclear renaissance" and said, "Nuclear power is safe. That's what we need to say when we talk to the public." California currently has two nuclear power stations on line.

Beller and Richard Rhodes co-authored

a feature article in the January/February 2000 issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine called "The Need for Nuclear Power." Using selective figures, the two nuclear power industry advocates argue nuclear power is the safest method of producing electricity. The "world needs more energy... Two billion people lack access to electricity," they wrote. "Development depends on energy, and the alternative to development is suffering: poverty, disease, and death. Such conditions create instability and the potential for widespread violence." Rhodes also testified before a Congressional subcommittee on the question last July in Washington.

Currently 434 nuclear reactors worldwide account for a little over 6 percent of the world's energy production. In the United States most are aging plants and few have been built since widespread protests, spurred on by the partial meltdown in 1979 of the Three Mile Island plant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, exposed the radiation dangers inherent in production and processing of uranium and the operation and decommissioning of the nuclear generating facilities.

Trying to undercut the gains made through the protest movement in the 1980s, Beller and Rhodes state in their article, "Physical reality—not arguments about corporate greed, hypothetical risks, radiation

exposure, or waste disposal—ought to inform decisions vital to the future of the world.... Despite its outstanding record, [nuclear power] has instead been relegated by its opponents to the same twilight zone of contentious ideological conflict as abortion and evolution. It deserves better."

Following publication of this article, noted syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer applauded its defense of nukes. "Why do oil prices periodically spike?" Krauthammer asked in his column dated March 17, 2000. "No mystery: backsiding on conservation, irrational restrictions on oil exploration, and a nuclear phobia that keeps us from substituting uranium for fossil fuels. OPEC sees all this, watches supplies tightening, [and] seizes the opportunity for a windfall by restricting supply even more."

As the California energy situation worsened, conservative columnist William Safire attacked the "bastion of liberalism" of California where people say "not in my backyard" to power plants as the reason for the crisis. "Environmentalists recoil in horror at suggestions of nuclear power, now a safe and clean source of electricity," continued Safire. "Reducing pollution sensibly is laudable, but clean-air extremists become local heroes without telling constituents the danger of loss of Intel jobs and cheap electricity's household convenience."

U.S. president George Bush added his attack on environmental regulations when he told the Associated Press, "A lot of the harshest critics of a balanced environmental policy are beginning to have rolling blackouts."

Current government policy, as stated in Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) documents, is that "radiation exposure SHALL be held to the absolute minimum or As Low as Reasonably Achievable (ALARA). This is particularly important since it is believed that risk is directly proportional to dose, without any threshold." The NRC states, "There is no dose of radiation so small that it will not have some effect" and that "any dose, no matter how small, produces some risk" of cell mutation and cancer.

New drilling leases

Besides promoting new nuclear power plants, the energy industry is pushing ahead with plans to drill for oil in ecologically sensitive areas. On January 19 designated interior secretary Gale Norton used the energy shortages in California to fortify her arguments that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, now protected by federal law, should be opened for oil drilling.

Meanwhile, the National Ocean Industries Association, a trade group representing the domestic offshore gas and oil industry, has urged the federal Minerals Management Service to consider new drilling leases in protected areas off California's coast along Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

Power crisis worsens for working people in California

Continued from front page

get. We get hurt the most. There is no crisis of energy. The cause is that corrupt corporations want more money out of the lowest income class."

Michael Pulsoni had a different take on the crisis, saying it was the "hallmark of incompetence. No attempt to increase resources. Part of the problem is environmental restrictions."

Fifteen minutes after talking with Alemán and Pulsoni, the lights went out.

The energy crisis is having an impact on dairy farmers who were already facing dropping milk prices and increasing costs. The *Modesto Bee* reported that dairy farmers have had to dump fresh milk in wastewater ponds since mid-December. When creameries and other businesses that process milk are slowed or closed due to power outages, trucks carrying milk from the farmers get backed up, forcing farmers to dispose of the highly perishable product. The Land O' Lakes processing plant in Tulare has dumped 450,000 pounds so far.

Developments over the past week highlight the depth of the crisis.

• \$400 million in state funds were allocated by the California legislature and Governor Davis January 19 to purchase energy for the two utilities, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison. This stopgap measure will last no more than a week at current wholesale prices. The state

could burn through more than \$5 billion in three months, said Roger Johnson, chief electricity market strategist for the California Department of Water Resources, the agency designated to buy the power.

• Both Southern California Edison and PG&E continue to edge toward declaring bankruptcy. If they do so, it would be the largest and third largest bankruptcy cases in U.S. history, involving a combined \$20 billion in debt.

Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service downgraded the two utilities bonds to junk status. Edison has defaulted on \$600 million in debts so far. Following the \$400 million state bailout, Standard & Poor placed the debt of California's state government on "credit watch."

• PG&E Corp. won federal government approval to change its corporate structure in order to insulate the bulk of its assets from the credit problems of its utility—PG&E Co. While PG&E's utility ran up a multibillion dollar deficit in recent months, the parent company continues to rake in substantial profits, increasing by 26 percent in the third quarter of last year alone.

Nearly half of PG&E's debt is owed to itself because the parent company sold energy at a substantial profit to its own subsidiary. With the looming bankruptcy of the utility portion of PG&E's operations, they convinced the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on December 28 to approve a

stock transfer plan that shields the assets of the parent company from its insolvent utility subsidiary.

• Shortages of gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel are possible as power interruptions shut down pipelines. Inventories are low, leading industry officials to predict even higher prices at the pump. Airline companies have expressed worries that fuel shortages could lead to major schedule disruptions. The normal six-day reserve of jet fuel at the San Francisco International Airport was down to just two days on January 18, Ron Wilson, a spokesman for the airport said.

• On January 18, deliveries of natural gas to PG&E power plants were stopped by two of its largest suppliers until they get paid in cash. The next day a third supplier followed suit, forcing the utility to draw heavily on its reserve fields at a rate that could deplete it within weeks. Natural gas fuels many of PG&E's power plants.

• In addition to layoffs of 1,000 of its 17,000 employees, 80 percent of PG&E's workers own company stock which has lost two-thirds of its value in recent months. Hard-earned retirement funds and savings are tied up in stock that has gone from \$28 two months ago to \$10.19 on January 19, its lowest point in 20 years.

Bernie Senter is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120.

10,000 march in UK against layoffs at General Motors

Continued from front page

"we heard it from our families who heard it on the radio," he said. "The only thing we could do was withdraw our labor. We heard that workers had done that in Germany and Spain, and we had to show that we're all in this together."

In mid-December, hundreds of workers at the Vauxhall plants in both Luton and Ellesmere Port walked off the job when they heard the announcement of the Luton plant closure, and they were joined by the warehouse workers.

The announcement of the Vauxhall plant shutdown followed the decision by Ford to end production at its Dagenham assembly plant in 2002 and the threatened closure of the Rover auto plant in Longbridge.

International solidarity

Workers from GM-owned Opel plants in Bochum, Germany; Antwerp, Belgium; and Zaragoza, Spain, had a big impact on the demonstration. John Gibbs, a Vauxhall worker, said, "I'm pleased with the turnout, especially the support from Germany. These 14 workers paid their own way to get here so that everyone can fight together."

The spirited march, led off by a band, went from the Vauxhall plant through Luton. Along the route many shops displayed posters against the plant closure. Despite freezing temperatures, workers stayed to listen intently to speakers at a rally in the center of town.

A number of production line workers opened the rally. Dino, a worker in the trim shop, welcomed the marchers. "Three generations of my family have worked at Vauxhall," he said. "This fight is not just for today, but for tomorrow. My Dad told me one stick they can break, a bunch of sticks they can't. We have to stand together." Asked about the atmosphere in the plant, Dino said it is "not downbeat. We have our heads high. We deserve a job, we have a right to a job."

The rally was also addressed by top officials of the TGWU; the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU); the Manufacturing, Science and Finance union; and the Trades Union Congress. Local Members of Parliament and the mayor of Luton also spoke. In addition there were videotaped messages from two officials of I.G. Metall, the union in Germany that organizes car workers, and messages of support from unions that organize GM plants in Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Portugal, and the United States.

The response of the Labour government to the closing has been met with anger by workers here. Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry secretary, said when the closure was announced that the government's "key aim will be to find new job opportunities to replace those being lost over the next year."

Rob Ferguson, who has worked in the body plant at Vauxhall Luton for 18 years, told the rally, "So far we've turned the government from the wrong side of the fence to sitting on the fence. But they need to do an awful lot more."

Another worker at the plant, who didn't want to give his name, said he thought the government had to do something. "My dad told me that was what the Labour Party was

for: the workers."

When local Labour MP Margaret Moran was introduced, she was met with boos and jeers.

A number of the speeches at the rally had a British nationalist, anti-American edge to them. Bill Morris, a TGWU official, declared, "We're backing Britain in defense of its manufacturing capacity. If Vauxhall wants to sell cars in Luton, it has to make cars in Luton." He said the problem was that "British workers are cheap and easy to sack."

Ken Jackson of the AEEU said, "It is unacceptable for Vauxhall to close a British plant to solve a European problem. Vauxhall is profitable and productive, and we believe there is a strong case for keeping Luton open." The union officials are calling for legislation to force companies to consult unions before making decisions about job cuts.

In contrast to this, the banner made by the workers from Bochum, Germany, read, "Save every job worldwide from Luton to Bochum." And workers at the rally showed a genuine appreciation of the solidarity of workers from other GM-owned plants. The loudest applause of the rally came when workers who had traveled from Germany, Belgium, and Spain were introduced.

Gerd, a worker at the Opel plant in Bochum, told the rally, "We are united as working people in GM plants all over the



Militant/Pat Shaw

Unionists march January 20 against GM bosses' plans to close Vauxhall auto plant in Luton, England, as part of axing thousands of jobs worldwide. "We have our heads high," said one worker. "We have a right to a job."

world. If you fight you may not always win, but if you don't fight you always lose. So let's fight." Another worker at Opel Bochum, Steffen Reichelt, explained to the *Militant* that the workforce there has been reduced from 20,000 workers in the early 1990s to 13,000 today. Some 700 more workers are to be laid off as part of the company's cutbacks.

Reichelt said a successful strike last June against bosses' plans to put part of the workforce under a separate management structure had boosted the confidence of

union members. "The strike lasted 35 hours, and after 20 hours or so it caused other plants in Europe to stop work. We could see our power," he said. Workers at Bochum raised money to send the 14 to the demonstration in Luton because "our problem is that they are trying to split us up in different plants and different nations. We say we have to stand together," he said.

Caroline O'Keefe is a member of the Young Socialists in London.

Miners gain improved black lung regulations

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—New regulations were introduced January 19 governing black lung legislation that will affect the lives of thousands of miners who have contracted this crippling disease.

Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), said, "The new rules represent a step forward—albeit a modest one—in easing the claims process for persons afflicted with black lung disease." He added, "While these changes do not go as far as we might have liked, we welcome any positive movement that helps level the playing field."

The coal operators vigorously oppose the changes. Through the National Mining Association, they filed a legal challenge to the new rules. The bosses' association called the rules "unnecessary, costly" and claim they "ignore science" and "place miners' jobs in jeopardy." The bosses say the regulations will result in future costs ranging from \$3.3 billion to \$7.2 billion and "will result in closure of many of the nation's small mines."

Black lung, or coal miners' pneumoconiosis, is caused by breathing in coal dust. While there is no cure, black lung can be eliminated through proper air ventilation, water sprays to reduce dust, and use of respirators. Roughly 1,500 workers a year die from this occupational disease.

The UMWA has pressed for changes in the regulations because of how few of those seeking benefits are able to win them. After the 1969 black lung strike, the Coal Act, which helps guarantee the funds needed to cover miners' lifetime health care, was

passed. In the early 1970s, about 70 percent of miners with black lung claims received compensation. The law was amended in 1981, and in the last 10 years less than 10 percent of those who have applied have won benefits. After a new workers compensation law was passed in Kentucky, the level there dropped below 1 percent.

The main gain for miners and their dependents through the new regulations is that, in a disputed claim, the number of medical reports that can be filed by either side is limited to two. Until now there was no limit to the number of such reports that could be filed. Roberts pointed out, "Right now it is virtually impossible for the average black lung victim to spend the money the company shells out to dispute these claims. Most victims become frustrated, or broke, trying to do so."

The new regulations also assist miners by placing more emphasis on their treating physicians' opinions, and affirm that black lung disease progresses with age.

Fred Cox, director of Tug River Health Association, points out that the rules "are not opening doors to be compensated, it represents a slight loosening of the regulations and carry some pitfalls." He explained that "many coal miners experience respiratory problems, but frequently do not seek medical attention. Under these rules, not seeking medical attention can be hurtful to the miner."

Sparkle Bonds, a staff person with the Virginia Black Lung Association, said she was disappointed that the changes did not include reducing the disability requirement for pulmonary function. She also noted that under the current law it is difficult to win a widow's claim, since one has to establish that the disease was a major cause of death.

The UMWA is organizing meetings to explain the new regulations. Around 150 miners, black lung activists, and health-care professionals from West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky attended one held in Charleston, West Virginia, January 12. A further explanation is scheduled for Uniontown, Pennsylvania, at 10:00 a.m. on February 9 at the local Holiday Inn.

Articles published in the *Roanoke Times* November 24 and 25 documented many of the problems miners and their dependents face today in battling to get benefits for black lung. Headlines in the articles include, "A coalfield legacy: black lung. As court battles for disability benefits drag on, miners slowly suffocate," and "30 years after new safety laws, black lung still runs rampant."

One miner quoted in the newspaper explained how he had his benefits granted temporarily by the Department of Labor, but when the coal company appealed, an administrative law judge from the Labor Department denied his benefits. "I couldn't afford to hire any experts to counter the number of experts they had," the miner said. Some miners in similar cases were forced to repay tens of thousands of dollars.

Another problem miners face is difficulty in getting lawyers to take a black lung case because the lawyer can only receive compensation if the miner wins the case. One miner had gone through four attorneys in his decades-long fight to gain benefits.

For another miner it took 14 years to get the company to pay. He said he never doubted he had black lung. "I reckon I made up my mind that I was going to go to my grave fighting," he said. "I didn't have anything to lose."

A miner who had his benefits denied on appeal by the companies was found after his death to have coal dust deposits and lesions in his lungs. His widow sought benefits. Medical experts for the company now admitted that the miner had black lung but said the disease had not contributed to his death. One claimed he "would have died on the same day, in the same manner, if he'd never set foot in a coal mine." His widow explained, "I was there every day with him and watched what it did. You had to be there to know."

In addition to the foot-dragging on improving the laws affecting black lung victims, action to prevent the disease has been slow. Because of the many cases of coal operators cheating, the Mine Safety and Health Administration said it was going to take over dust sampling in the mines, but that has yet to happen. Last year a contractor for Eastern Associated Coal Corp. was charged in a district court in Charleston, West Virginia, with 18 counts of faking dust samples in 1997 and 1998.

At the same time as proposing the government take over dust monitoring, the Labor Department proposed new rules covering allowable dust levels. At hearings organized by the department across the coalfields, hundreds of miners spoke out against the proposed rules, calling for lower limits on dust levels and pointing to other problems with the rules, particularly as they apply to longwall mining.

Tony Lane is a member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248 in southwestern Pennsylvania.

For further reading

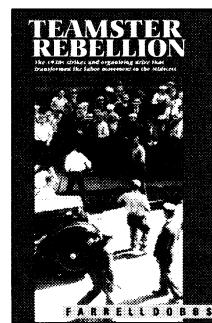
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Five-year lockout ends at Crown Petroleum

Continued from front page

ing demands for concessions, workers began circulating a petition demanding a decent contract. All 252 workers signed the petition.

On Jan. 18, 1996, 175 workers met in the parking lot at the end of the day shift and marched to the company's administration building to present their petition to the refinery manager, Randall Trembly.

They marched in to the building chanting, "We ain't gonna take it! We ain't gonna take it!"

Crown called the police and claimed the workers were rioting. The cops, once inside the building, shoved their way to the front of the crowd, where they ordered the unionists to leave the building. The workers refused. They demanded to speak to Trembly.

Eventually, the workers agreed to leave the building, but only after Trembly agreed to come outside and meet with them.

Union membership at the refinery was high. According to antiunion "right-to-work" laws in Texas, companies can "encourage" workers not to join the union even after they have won the right to organize. In the months prior to the lockout, five workers did not belong to the union. By the time the lockout began in February 1996, union membership in the plant was 100 percent.

Contract negotiations continued until February 5, when Crown bosses ordered their security guards to escort all the union workers out of the refinery.

Crown thought the unionists would fold in a few weeks, evidenced by the fact that they did not hire replacement workers until a few months into the lockout. The company initially operated the refinery with supervisors, engineers, and clerical staff, who had to work long hours to keep it running. They did not begin to hire replacements until after their salaried personnel began reporting emotional and physical problems as a result of the work conditions.

During the course of the five-year lockout, the employer attempted to break the union, using the courts, the police, the FBI, and financial hardship. They started charging workers hundreds of dollars for health insurance that was formerly covered by Crown. They hired hundreds of replacement workers. Their security guards harassed the pickets night and day. They hired private investigators to follow locked-out workers.

The company accused workers of sabotaging the refinery while they were still working there. They called in the FBI, which conducted a so-called investigation. The FBI offered as much as \$60,000 to the locked-out workers for "information," but got no takers. The investigation was closed in 1999—they never charged anyone with a crime.

In January 1998, Crown filed a civil lawsuit in federal court against 14 workers and the local union, reasserting its allegations of sabotage. Hundreds of hours of depositions were taken from workers, with tens of thousands of pages of documents turned over to the company. The tactics used by the Crown bosses changed with the seasons. When they could not successfully frame the workers using one approach, they would change their tactic and their allegations and give it another go. When that didn't work, they changed it again. Crown persisted in harassing union members through this lawsuit right up to the end of the lockout.

Bosses initiate red-baiting campaign

With the help of the *Houston Chronicle*, the bosses initiated a red-baiting campaign that targeted Dean Cook with the goal of splitting the union.

In the Aug. 13, 1999, issue of the *Chronicle*, reporter L.M. Sixel repeated company charges that "the Baltimore refiner claims a local union leader who has protested the lockout at Crown's Pasadena refinery is using Crown to foment revolution.... It was admittedly strange, said Crown spokesman Bruce Hicks, when company officials first learned that Dean Cook, a longtime Crown employee and one of the leaders of the lockout protest, is a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Hicks said other members of the union local also have attended party functions."

But the red-baiting attack did not achieve the divisive effect intended, as workers answered it. B. J. Case, a locked-out worker, wrote in a letter to the *Chronicle*, "No person's political persuasion caused the



Militant/Phil Duzinski

Oil workers protest in Pasadena, Texas, January 1996. After five-year lockout, Crown could not keep the union workers out.

lockout and not one of us who are locked out are standing in the way of its end.

"We did not invent the fact that Crown disregards the health and safety of the community and the environment, nor that it routinely discriminates against women and minorities at its Pasadena refinery. On the other hand, Crown did invent the idea that workers sabotaged the refinery."

Workers' response

The workers responded to the lockout by setting up a 24-hour picket line at the refinery seven days a week. The picket line remained in force, uninterrupted, for two years. The unionists were forced to remove their picket shack after Crown bought the land it was sitting on. Workers then went to a daylight picket, which they continued to the end of the lockout.

In the first months of the lockout, workers maintained a large presence around the refinery, but did not actually picket the refinery gates. Union officials feared plant-gate picketing might jeopardize the charges of unfair labor practices their lawyers had filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). It was two years into the lockout before the plant-gate picketing began.

The union lawyers filed charges against the company again and again, throughout most of the lockout. With one minor exception, the NLRB always ruled in favor of the company.

The unionists reached out for support in nearby communities and to workers at other refineries and chemical plants. They parti-

pated in community festivals and parades, campaigning for solidarity and highlighting the company's disregard for workers' safety and the environment. At one festival, the 1998 Pasadena Strawberry Festival, workers were awarded first prize for "best-decorated booth." The following year, organizers of the event tried to discourage the workers from participating in the festival.

Workers at Crown and their supporters made trips to extend solidarity to other workers in struggle—to Illinois coal miners on strike, Titan Tire strikers and workers at a catfish-processing plant in Mississippi, locked-out Kaiser Aluminum workers in Louisiana and Ohio, and workers at Budweiser in Houston fighting for a contract. Crown workers participated in rallies in Washington organized by farmers fighting for their land and against discrimination.

Unionists leafleted neighborhoods where the Crown bosses lived as well as the corporate headquarters in Baltimore as part of a "corporate campaign" against the company.

They held rallies at the refinery in Pasadena and at Crown headquarters in Maryland. The last major rally, a day-long event held Feb. 5, 1999, at the refinery and at the union hall in Pasadena, marked the three-year anniversary of the lockout. The refinery workers were joined in their rally by workers from around the Houston area, as well as locked-out and striking workers from around the country and a Georgia farmer who is a member of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, which is fight-

ing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's discriminatory policies.

Breaking the deadlock

For years negotiations had been at near-deadlock. The company could have declared negotiations at an impasse and implemented its contract. This would have forced the workers to come back under the terms in Crown's offer, or forced them to go on strike, at which point the company could have permanently replaced them. That didn't happen.

The negotiations deadlock was broken when those on the company's "hit list"—workers Crown was demanding be fired with no arbitration rights—began offering to resign as a means of removing obstacles to getting the union back in the plant. The company eventually agreed to this, helping pave the way for the remaining items of contention to be resolved.

Crown operated the refinery for five years without a union, but in the end they could not keep the union out. They failed to take away workers' ability to defend their rights, to have a voice on the job. Workers now have an opportunity to win to the union those who have been working in the plant without a union for five years and who will remain in the plant as the union workers return.

By voting to accept the contract, union members have secured the right of workers at Crown to be in the best position to continue this fight.

Dean Cook was locked out by Crown Petroleum in February 1996. Jacquie Henderson is a sewing machine operator in Houston.

Volunteers needed for 'red weekend' of repairs, maintenance at Pathfinder Building

BY GREG McCARTAN

Socialist workers, Young Socialists, and other supporters of Pathfinder Press are planning a volunteer weekend Friday, February 2 through Sunday, February 4 to carry out needed maintenance and repairs to the building that houses the publisher and its printshop. The project follows up on a successful international volunteer mobilization of more than 120 people December 14-24 that focused on transferring Pathfinder's inventory and customer and financial information onto an Internet-based program.

"A large building that is heavily used needs constant upkeep and repair so it remains in topnotch condition," said Ruth Robinett, a garment worker in New York and a member of the steering committee for the volunteer project, known as a Red Weekend. "The work will include painting, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, cleaning, masonry, and, weather permitting, some roof repairs." Robinett, a leader of the Garment District branch of the Socialist Workers Party in New York City, one of four branches in the area hosting and organizing the effort, invited "all supporters of Pathfinder to contribute volunteer labor in a collective project that will advance the production and distribution of Pathfinder books and pamphlets."

In order to make the most of the weekend project, some volunteers are needed in the days leading up to February 2 to figure out what each job involves, order materials, and put together teams with necessary skills.

Some jobs may take a few days longer than the weekend to complete, said Robinett, so any volunteer who can plan to stay a few extra days is encouraged to do so.

There will be several Militant Labor Forums over the weekend and the SWP branches and Young Socialists are planning a social event for the evening of February 3. Volunteers will meet at the Garment District hall in Manhattan each morning to plan the work for the day.

"The Red Weekend is taking place at a good time," said Paul Mailhot, who is also helping to organize the volunteer work effort. "Pathfinder is in the middle of producing several new books, including *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia* and *Haciendo historia*. A team from Pathfinder will be in Havana setting up for the international book fair there, where the full range of Pathfinder titles will be available to thousands of working people and young people, not only from Cuba but from other countries as well."

"At the same time we are planning the Red Weekend," said Robinett, "supporters of Pathfinder here in New York and elsewhere are getting organized to sell books and pamphlets it distributes to bookstores and libraries on an expanded basis. We're having continued success setting up literature tables on the streets and in the subways too."

Last week during bad weather two teams each sold more than \$100 of socialist literature from tables set up in the subways.

One young woman who met the team attended a Militant Labor Forum on defending women's rights several days later. "So the Red Week is part of this ongoing work to reach out to workers, farmers, and youth with revolutionary and Marxist books and pamphlets," she said. Robinett encouraged anyone interested in joining the project to call (212) 695-1809 for more information.

From Pathfinder

The Communist Manifesto

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Founding document of the modern

working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communism is derived not from preconceived principles but from facts and proletarian movements springing from the actual class struggle. \$3.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

New Bay of Pigs books tell of first defeat for U.S. in the Americas

BY LUIS MADRID

Pathfinder is publishing two new books for the 40th anniversary of the U.S. defeat at the Bay of Pigs by Cuba's working people and their revolutionary leadership.

Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas will be off the presses in early March. In early February Pathfinder is releasing *Haciendo historia*, a Spanish-language edition of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

Bay of Pigs features a firsthand account by Brig. Gen. José Ramón Fernández of the events of April 17–19, 1961, when an invading force of 1,500 U.S.-organized Cuban counterrevolutionary mercenaries was crushed in 72 hours by the combined operations of the popular militias and the fledgling Revolutionary Armed Forces at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), as the battle is known in Cuba.

Working directly under the command of Fidel Castro, then-Captain Fernández was field commander of the Cuban forces charged with beating back the mercenary assault.

The account contained in the new Pathfinder book was given by Fernández in July

1999 as testimony for a lawsuit against the U.S. government filed in a Havana court by several Cuban organizations. The suit demanded damages for the military attacks, economic embargo, and other aggression against the Cuban people sponsored and organized by Washington, and has been used to educate about these facts. Fernández describes how working people mobilized and successfully defended their revolution. Maps and charts help readers follow his detailed account.

The new Pathfinder title also includes excerpts of three major speeches by Fidel Castro, on the eve of the U.S.-sponsored invasion and following Cuba's victory, where the revolutionary leader explains to the people of Cuba and the world the political stakes in this fight and proclaims the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

The introduction to the book highlights the impact the Cuban victory over U.S. imperialism had on a generation of young people in the United States who were being won to the communist movement as they responded to the socialist revolution in Cuba and the deepening mass struggles to bring down Jim Crow segregation at home.

Pathfinder to launch new titles at Cuba fair

BY LUIS MADRID

Four new titles will be presented by Pathfinder Press during the Tenth International Havana Book Fair, to be held February 2–10. One is *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, a firsthand account by Rodolfo Saldaña. The second is *Haciendo historia*, Pathfinder's Spanish-language edition of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

A third title that will be new to those attending the Havana book fair is *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters. Also being presented this year is *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes.

Tens of thousands of people are expected to attend the book fair, a major cultural event in Latin America. According to fair organizers, this year publishers from 27 coun-

tries and 62 Cuban publishing houses will have books on display.

As in previous years, there will also be a number of book launchings and other special events during the course of the fair. Pathfinder will again have a booth at the book fair.

Pathfinder's English-language edition of *Fertile Ground* will be launched together with a Spanish edition by Cuban publisher Editora Política. In this book, Bolivian revolutionary Rodolfo Saldaña explains how he joined with Che Guevara, one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution, in the revolutionary front that Guevara led in Bolivia in 1966–67, as part of the effort to build a revolutionary movement throughout South America.

He describes the struggles by workers and peasants in Bolivia at the time that created "fertile ground" for revolutionary struggle (see the foreword to *Fertile Ground*, by Harry

Meeting in Los Angeles celebrates life of Judy White

BY NAN BAILEY

LOS ANGELES—More than 100 people met here January 21 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Judy White, a longtime member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party.

In addition to political collaborators and friends of White from the Los Angeles area, people arrived from a number of cities to attend the event, including San Francisco, Fresno, San Diego, and Santa Cruz, California; Seattle; Tucson, Arizona; Grand Junction, Colorado; and Vancouver, Canada.

Speakers at the meeting were Mary-Alice Waters, on behalf of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party; Wendy Lyons, for the Los Angeles branch of the SWP; Ana Ramírez, organizer of the Los Angeles chapter of the Young Socialists; and SWP National Committee member Norton Sandler. John Benson, a leader of the SWP in Fresno and a member of the party's United Food and Commercial Workers national fraction steering committee, chaired the event.

Messages to the meeting were received from more than a dozen comrades and friends who knew and worked with White politically, including from a few who explained that she had been instrumental in recruiting them to the communist move-

ment. Several of the messages were read to the meeting.

The event opened with a reception where participants were able to meet each other and enjoy a fine spread of refreshments prepared by party supporters in Los Angeles. One special feature was a display of White's life and the many tumultuous events she was part of as a member of the SWP for more than three decades. These included the Cuban revolution, the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the women's liberation movement, the work of the U.S. Committee for Justice for Latin American Political Prisoners, which White helped to found, the rise and fall of the Nicaraguan revolution, and the important role of the *Militant*, the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books in the party-building work that Judy White contributed to. A team of volunteers, which included the entire chapter of the Los Angeles Young Socialists, prepared the displays.

Some \$3,500 was raised at the event for the Judy White Party-Building Fund. Those interested in contributing to this fund can send contributions to the SWP at 406 West Street, New York, NY 10014–2570. A fuller report on the meeting will appear in a coming issue of the *Militant*.



Courtesy of José Ramón Fernández/Photo: Miguel Viñas
José Ramón Fernández, center, field commander of revolutionary armed forces during Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. In new Pathfinder book Fernández describes how Cuban workers and farmers mobilized to crush U.S.-organized mercenary forces.

Bay of Pigs is a complement to *Haciendo historia* and *Making History*. Three of the generals interviewed in this powerful collection were the commanders of Cuba's armed forces at the Bay of Pigs. Besides

Fernández, they are Enrique Carreras, an air force commander, and Néstor López Cuba, who commanded a tank unit. Also interviewed is Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas, who fought with Ernesto Che Guevara in the Cuban revolutionary war, in the Congo in 1965, and in Bolivia in 1966–67.

Their accounts give a vivid picture of the ordinary men and women who, in their millions, have made the Cuban revolution, and of the caliber of their proletarian leadership.

Books for Cuba: a special appeal

In preparation for the Havana International Book Fair, which will be held February 2–10, the *Militant* has launched an appeal for contributions to the Books for Cuba Fund.

Since 1986, Pathfinder supporters have had a booth displaying books and pamphlets at the Havana book fair, previously biannual and now, as of this year, an annual event.

During the fairs, students, workers, librarians, soldiers, teachers, and others have frequently requested complimentary copies of a broad range of Pathfinder titles. To respond to these requests for revolutionary literature, donations of Pathfinder books have been made to libraries, schools, political organizations, and other institutions in Cuba.

The fund also makes it possible to provide a large selection of Pathfinder titles at the book fair and to sell them in pesos at prices most Cubans can afford.

In addition, this year the Books for Cuba Fund will make possible a special donation of 300 copies of the new Pathfinder title *Haciendo historia*—the Spanish-language edition of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. Copyright © 2001 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

On April 19, 1961, Cuba's revolutionary militias and fledgling armed forces crushed an invasion of U.S.-organized mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs. Their triumph, in less than 72 hours of combat, resounded throughout the world. It dashed Washington's hopes for a quick or easy overturn of the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

The men and women of Cuba who fought and won at Playa Girón were ordinary working people. Most were still in their teens or early twenties. Who they were, where they came from, and the experiences that molded them are the subject of this book.

As the 40th anniversary of the first military defeat of U.S. imperialism in Latin America is commemorated, Cuban generals José Ramón Fernández, Enrique Carreras, Néstor López Cuba, and Harry Villegas—three of them commanders of the victorious forces at the Bay of Pigs—talk of that battle, the October 1962 "missile" crisis, and the other experiences that transformed them, from the Sierra Maestra mountains of Cuba to Nicaragua, Angola, and Vietnam.

The bulk of this amount was raised at a Christmas Eve celebration in New York of the completion of a volunteer project to advance the production and distribution of Pathfinder books.

The volunteers, who came from cities around the United States and several other countries, carried out a successful 11-day effort to transfer Pathfinder Press's inventory and financial records to an Internet-based accounting program.

Additional contributions have already come in from *Militant* readers.

Checks can be made payable to the *Militant*, earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund," and sent to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York NY 10014.

Cuban general Harry Villegas salutes book by Bolivian revolutionary Rodolfo Saldaña

Reprinted below is the foreword to *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, a firsthand account by Rodolfo Saldaña. Pathfinder is scheduled to release this title in February simultaneously with a Spanish-language edition by the Cuban publisher Editora Política. The book consists of an interview with Bolivian revolutionary Rodolfo Saldaña.

The interview was conducted in Havana in April 1997 by Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International* and president of Pathfinder, and Pathfinder editor Michael Taber. The introduction to the book is by Waters.

As a youth Saldaña joined the Communist Party of Bolivia in 1950. In 1955-58, by decision of the party, he worked in the Siglo XX tin mine, where he helped recruit leaders of the miners and establish the Communist Party there. He took part in logistical preparations and support work for both the 1963 Peruvian guerrilla movement defeated at Puerto Maldonado and the 1963-64 guerrilla front in Salta, Argentina, led by Jorge Ricardo Masetti with the backing of the Cuban revolutionary leadership.

Saldaña joined with Ernesto Che Guevara, one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution, in the 1966-67 revolutionary front that Guevara led in Bolivia. After leaving the Communist Party over its refusal to support this effort, Saldaña became a founding member of the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Bolivia, led by Guevara and Bolivian revolutionary Inti Peredo. He was slated to join the guerrilla effort as a combatant, but circumstances kept him at the head of the ELN's underground network in the cities and tin mining regions. In October 1967 Guevara was captured in a battle at the Yuro Ravine and assassinated by U.S.-trained Bolivian army forces. Saldaña subsequently remained active in revolutionary politics, both in Bolivia and in Cuba.

Harry Villegas was a member of the general staff of the guerrilla unit led by Guevara in Bolivia. Also known by his nom de guerre, Pombo, he led the surviving veterans of the guerrilla campaign out of the encirclement by the U.S.-backed Bolivian army, and with the help of Bolivian revolutionaries was able to escape. Today Villegas holds the rank of brigadier general in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. He is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and serves as a national leader of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

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BY HARRY VILLEGRAS

In writing these lines I am fulfilling two duties. First, invoking the memory of a friend and comrade with whom I shared many revolutionary actions. Second, responding to the request by Hero of the Republic of Cuba, Army Corps General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, who was a comrade of Rodolfo Saldaña in the latter's revolutionary work going back to the 1960s.¹

"With them came Rodolfo, who made a very good impression on me. He seems more determined than Bigote to break with everything. Papi informed him of my presence." This is what Commander Ernesto Che Guevara wrote in his field diary in Bolivia on November 20, 1966. The following day he noted, "I asked Rodolfo to send us an agronomist who can be trusted."

The interview with this outstanding Bolivian combatant conducted by Mary-Alice Waters and Mike Taber offers a close-up, human view of a long record of intense revolutionary battles beginning in 1950.

Loyalty, firmness, modesty, solidarity, humility, and dedication to the freedom of the peoples. These are words that define the life of the communist Rodolfo Saldaña.

¹ Army Corps General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra is the highest-ranking officer in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces after Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro. In Bolivia and Argentina in 1962-64, he collaborated with revolutionaries in those countries to help prepare conditions for the guerrilla nucleus that was headed by Jorge Ricardo Masetti in northern Argentina.



Richard Dindo

Cuban, Bolivian, and Peruvian members of guerrilla unit led by Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1966-67. Rodolfo Saldaña helped found National Liberation Army of Bolivia, headed by Guevara (second from left) and Inti Peredo (second from right).

Cuban revolutionaries are aware that starting in 1963 Saldaña gave full support to Che's plans to open a guerrilla front in Salta, Argentina, as well as to the movement in Puerto Maldonado, Peru. This is yet further evidence of his Latin American patriotism, of his opposition to imperialism, always in search of attaining true freedom.

Whether as student, mine worker, auto mechanic, teacher, member of the Bolivian Communist Party and its Central Committee, or leader of the urban network of the National Liberation Army of Bolivia, what characterized Saldaña was his honesty, personal example, and faithfulness to principles. In reality he reached what Che called "the highest level attained by the human species," that of being a revolutionary.

His incorporation into the Bolivian guerrilla front—for which he had received training beginning in January 1966—was prevented by factors beyond his control and choice. These included the necessity both of Tania's trip to the guerrilla front and then of her remaining there, which meant he had to continue his work in the city.² Another factor, resulting from the Bolivian army's cordon around the zone of operations, was that contact with the guerrilla front and with Cuba was lost, despite efforts by the urban network to reestablish lines of communication. Unfortunately, Che never knew of these efforts.

In face of the treacherous stance by Mario Monje, general secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, Saldaña was compelled to leave the party he helped found, and that, from the time he was very young, had changed the course of his life.³ Saldaña's firm decision to follow Che must have been very difficult and painful. But with integrity and conviction, he was prepared to implement this decision, adopted completely and without hesitation, because he was conscious of the full liberating dimension of Che's actions.

A few words on a personal note. We experienced Saldaña's solidarity and comradeship after we had evaded the encirclement of ten thousand Bolivian troops. We were in Cochabamba at the time, and knowledge of our presence in that city was spreading through "Radio Bemba," as we say in Cuba, that is, by word of mouth.

² Tania was the nom de guerre of Haydée Tamara Bunke, a German-Argentine who in Bolivia worked with the ELN's urban network. In March 1967, while escorting visitors to Che's guerrilla camp, her cover was blown, leading to her incorporation as combatant.

³ After committing the support of the Communist Party of Bolivia, Mario Monje, the party's general secretary, reneged on this commitment to the guerrilla front led by Che Guevara, and instead waged a campaign in the CP to try to prevent those members who backed the guerrilla, such as Saldaña, from offering any support.

Paz. Arriving at the house where we were to be hidden, we noticed two soldiers coming toward our car. Seeing us reach for our revolvers, Rodolfo touched my hand and said, "Easy, it's beyond their imagination that you could be here," giving us a demonstration of courage, dependability, and composure.

Later in Cuba, under the leadership of Guido (Inti) Peredo, the survivors of the October 8, 1967, battle at the Yuro Ravine underwent military training. The objective was to fulfill our commitment to continue the struggle. With great resolve and dedication, Saldaña trained alongside Bolivian, Chilean, and Cuban revolutionaries. His uppermost objective was always to "return to the mountains" in order to obtain the victory of the people of Bolivia and of the Americas.

While living in Cuba he participated in the revolution and felt fulfillment in being a builder of socialism. This was the great dream of a life dedicated entirely to the working people, with the working people, and for the working people.

Following Rodolfo Saldaña's recent death in Havana, his remains were returned to his Bolivian homeland. The publication of this valuable testimony, left by him as a legacy, constitutes a posthumous tribute to a vanguard combatant, a man faithful to the ideas to which he dedicated his life.

Hasta la victoria siempre
Harry Villegas Tamayo
Havana, January 18, 2001

Progress in Pathfinder sales

BY GREG McCARTAN

Initial reports indicate progress in the efforts by members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party to place Pathfinder titles in bookstores and libraries where workers and others can readily find them.

Many supporters of the communist movement are already involved in the Pathfinder Reprint Project, whose goal is to put all of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets in electronic, print-ready form. Their advances on this front have encouraged them to join in the effort by SWP members and Young Socialists to increase the distribution and sales of revolutionary literature.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, Peter Buch and Raúl González, two volunteer sales representatives, recently secured an order for nearly \$600 from a local bookstore for multiple copies of 13 titles.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, Mark Weddleton

obtained a \$65 order placed by a local bookstore that includes titles by Malcolm X, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Evelyn Reed. "I had fun doing this," Weddleton reports. "The buyer was friendly and said that if these titles do well he might try some others."

Weddleton later traveled to Des Moines, Iowa, to meet with Pathfinder supporters there about his experiences.

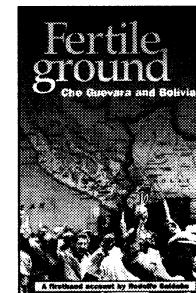
Laura Estupinian, a supporter in Houston, gained a \$175 order from a college bookstore and reports she has taken part in several visits to a major university library.

To aid in this effort, supporters of the communist movement in San Francisco have prepared a training class syllabus for themselves and SWP and YS members engaged in this work.

The syllabus goes step-by-step over how to plan and carry out a sales visit with a book

Continued on page 12

New from Pathfinder!



20% DISCOUNT

through April 1 for members of Pathfinder Readers Club

Fertile Ground
CHE GUEVARA AND BOLIVIA

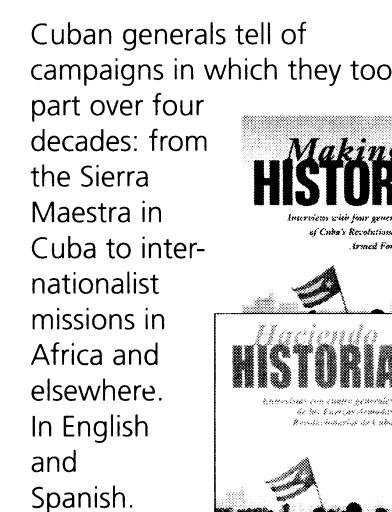
A firsthand account by Rodolfo Saldaña

Rodolfo Saldaña was one of the Bolivians who joined ranks in 1966-67 with Ernesto Che Guevara to forge a revolutionary movement of workers, peasants, and young people to overturn the military dictatorship in Bolivia and open the road to socialist revolution in South America. Here, Saldaña talks about the unresolved battles of the tin miners, peasants, and indigenous peoples of his country that created "fertile ground" for Guevara's revolutionary course and mark out the future of Bolivia and the Americas.

Special offer \$8.00 (regular price \$9.95)

MAKING HISTORY

Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Special offer from Pathfinder: 25% off

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NOW IN ENGLISH

Pathfinder was Born with the October Revolution

BY MARY-AICE WATERS

"The best materials Pathfinder publishes are those produced in the heat of political battle. We let revolutionists speak for themselves, in their own words. Revolutionary-minded

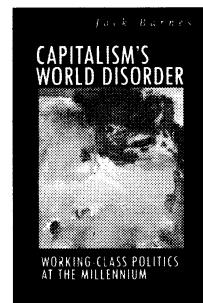
workers, and youth attracted toward them, don't primarily need interpreters or intermediaries. They need the words themselves, presented accurately and completely, translated honestly and clearly.

"Picking up a Pathfinder book and reading Marx, or Lenin, or Malcolm X, or Che Guevara for yourself not only increases your knowledge, it also deepens your self-confidence and stretches your political horizons."

\$2.25 (Normally \$3.00)

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The deeper social and political roots of the seemingly accidental events surrounding the extraordinarily close 2000 presidential election



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BY JACK BARNES

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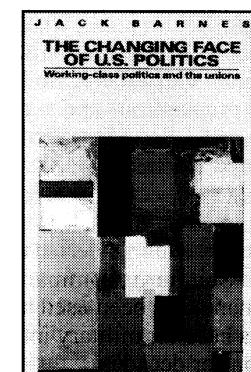
The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

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BY JACK BARNES

A handbook for the new generation coming into the factories, mines, and mills as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism today. It shows how millions of working people, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions and other organizations, and all of society. Available in Spanish and French.

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BY LEON TROTSKY **\$14.00**

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BY MARY-AICE WATERS

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The structure and character of an oppressed people on a world scale, and the concrete nature of the state of Israel as an oppressor nation. The assimilationist illusions that arise among broad layers of the Jewish population during periods of extended imperialist economic expansion and working-class retreat, as well as the weight and place of the fight against Jew-hatred in the proletarian struggle for a socialist revolution in the United States and elsewhere.



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Traces the historical rationalizations of anti-Semitism to the fact that Jews—in the centuries preceding the domination of industrial capitalism—were forced to become a "people-class" of

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How Can the Jews Survive?

A Socialist Answer to Zionism

BY GEORGE NOVACK **\$2.00** (Normally \$2.50)

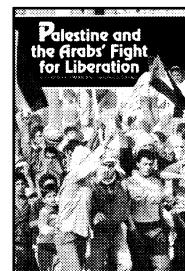
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Fundamental Principles of Revolutionary Marxism

Contains the full text of the resolution *Israel and the Arab Revolution*, and other documents written to guide revolutionary workers and farmers in the struggle against imperialist exploitation and Zionist rule. **\$5.25** (Normally \$7.00)

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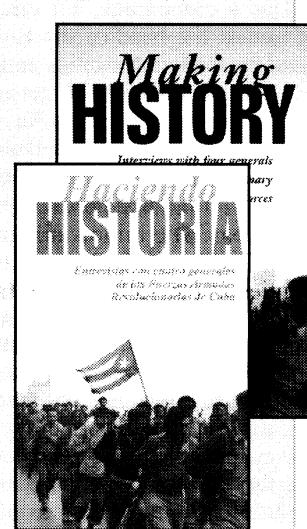
Making History

Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces

Cuban generals tell of campaigns in which they took part over four decades: from the Sierra Maestra in Cuba to internationalist missions in Africa and elsewhere. Includes accounts of the defeat of the Washington-backed

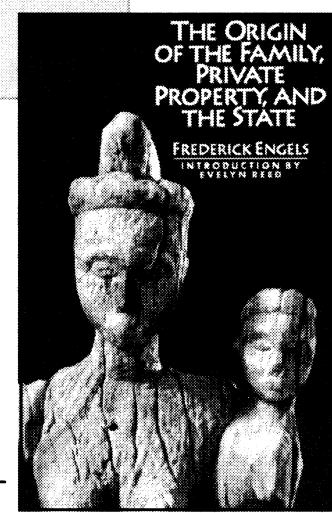
counterrevolutionary forces at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. The 40th anniversary of that historic victory for the revolution and its defenders will be celebrated this year.

\$12.00 (Normally \$15.95)



Join the Readers Club

For a \$10.00 annual fee Pathfinder Readers Club members receive a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder books and pamphlets at any Pathfinder bookstore, and higher discounts on selected titles. Contact the Pathfinder bookstore nearest you, listed on Page 12, or send \$10.00 to Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



To order these and other titles, or the new Pathfinder catalog, you can write to the above address. Please include \$3 for shipping and handling. Pathfinder titles are available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

The Historic Change in the Family Structure and Coming Social Battles

The sharp rise in the households headed by "single women" in the imperialist world outside Japan, and the implications of this process for the character of coming political and social conflicts. These effects are registered in the sharpening battle over the social wage, the fight for women's liberation, and on many fronts of the so-called cultural war.

Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation (3 PARTS)

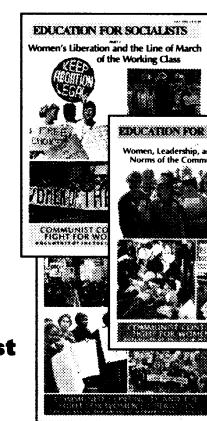
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EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MARY-AICE WATERS

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U.S. military presence in Latin America grows

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington is steadily stepping up its military presence in South America, establishing bases and troop deployments on a level not seen for many years. The Pentagon acknowledges establishing air bases in El Salvador, the Dutch colonies of Aruba and Curaçao. And in Ecuador, U.S. military personnel will be deployed at an air base there.

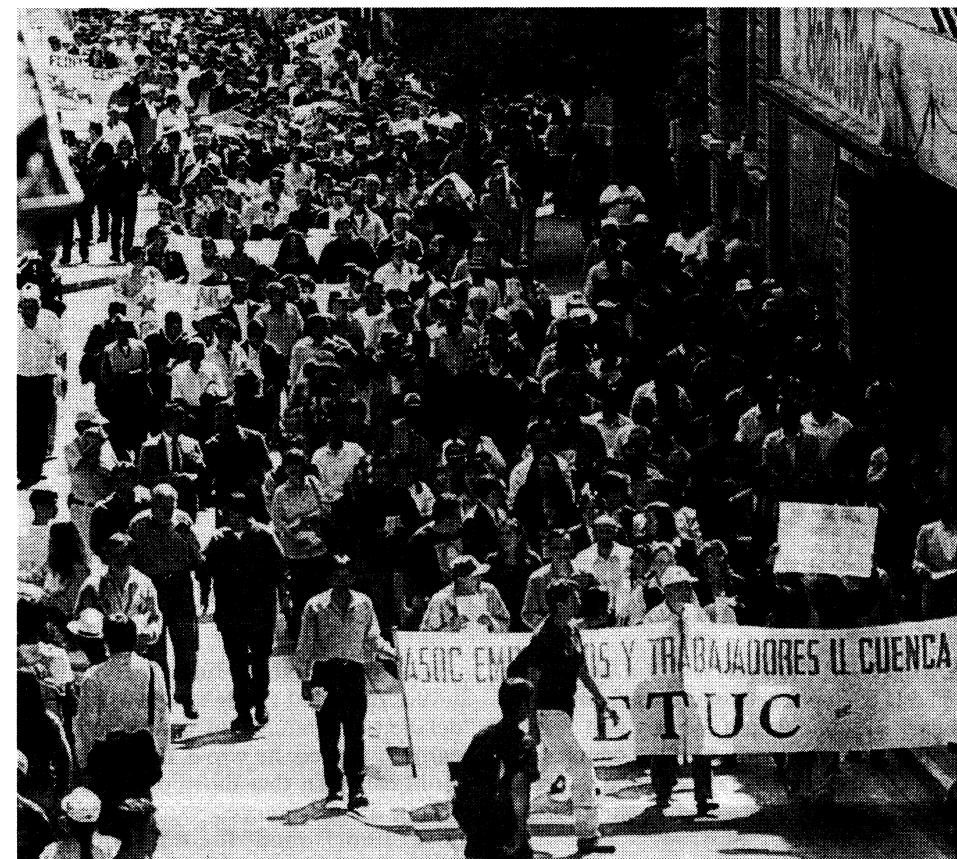
At least 150 U.S. special forces troops have been sent to Colombia as part of a \$1.3 billion military training and aid initiative by Washington. The U.S. is also working with the government of Peru to establish military patrols of the Amazon river basin.

Testifying before a Congressional committee last March, Gen. Charles Wilhelm, the commander in chief of the U.S. Southern Command, spoke about the Pentagon's perspective for the region. "The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Panama and return of U.S. bases required us to reestablish an effective theater architecture as a top priority," stated Wilhelm, who pointed to the need for "FOLs" (forward operating locations) to "better position our assets."

Since returning the Panama Canal to Panama on December 31, 1999, Washington closed Howard Air Force Base in that country and transferred the headquarters for the Southern Command to Puerto Rico. Panama has been used by U.S. imperialism as a base for military intervention in the region for decades.

Noting the continuing economic crisis and social instability in the region, the general added, "Many of the nations in our AOR [Area of Responsibility] are burdened with problems that frustrate internal development and threaten political stability." Pointing to "changes in the political climate and growing economic challenges," he called for "increasing our engagement in several areas."

Washington thinly veils this restructuring of U.S. military "assets" on the ground in Latin America as part of the "war on drugs." This was the rationale used for passage of the two-year \$1.3 billion military aid package last July by the U.S. Congress. Among the duties of the 150 U.S. military personnel is training three Colombian army battalions to be the spearhead of a renewed government offensive against armed opposition groups, such as the 20,000-strong Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which controls up to 40 percent of the country, and the smaller National Lib-



Some 4,000 people marched in Cuenca, Ecuador, January 10 against government austerity, including higher fuel prices and public transportation fares. Protests in Ecuador have also opposed U.S. air base in Manta. Under guise of 'fighting drugs,' Washington's military expansion in Latin America is aimed at struggles of workers and peasants.

eration Army (ELN).

To aid this effort the U.S. government will also supply the regime with an armada of 18 Blackhawk and 42 Huey military helicopters to ferry troops, as well as a \$500 million grant to the Colombian army and police. A Pentagon official told the *Washington Post*, "We'll find out in January whether the military's southern offensive will demonstrate, for the first time in Colombia's protracted guerrilla war, that it can seize and hold the initiative."

Washington's military "aid" package to Colombia is the fourth largest outlay after the regimes in Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. It was supposed to be conditional until the secretary of state certified the Colombian military's "human rights performance" was improving. However, U.S. president William Clinton exercised a waiver of this provision on "national security" grounds.

President George Bush made clear during his election campaign that he backs this

deepening U.S. military intervention in Colombia, and his new administration will be taking major responsibility for implementing this. A slightly different point of view from that of Bush was put forward by Donald Rumsfeld during his confirmation hearings for the cabinet post of secretary of defense. He stated that he had not yet formulated an opinion on the \$1.3 billion military package being given to Colombia.

What's involved in going after drug production there, according to Rumsfeld, is "overwhelmingly a demand problem. If demand persists, it's going to get what it wants. And if it isn't from Colombia, it's going to be from someplace else."

Protests in Ecuador

The U.S. formally gained access to a military base in Manta, Ecuador, in November 1999, signing a 10-year lease with then Ecuadorian president Jamil Mahuad. Implementation was slowed when mass protests

against Mahuad's austerity drive removed him from office. During the May Day protests last year, which attracted 50,000 workers, Indian peasants, and youth for a march through the streets of Quito, the capital city, part of the demonstrators rallied in front of the U.S. embassy to protest against the U.S. military base. They carried signs in Quechua saying, Americans out of Manta. One of the chants of the marchers was, "We don't want to be a U.S. colony."

But Washington is now upgrading the facility—the second largest port on that nation's coast—to be what Wilhelm calls "my number one priority" as "the only FOL that enables us to achieve full coverage of Peru, Colombia, and...areas of Bolivia." This includes spending \$62 million to expand and improve runways and hangars and construction of living quarters for 200 U.S. military and civilian contract personnel.

According to the *New York Times*, the base "will be able to provide round-the-clock tracking of activity in Colombia and neighboring countries through a pair of Awacs surveillance planes...and tankers to refuel them in the air." The *Times* adds, "The planes will also be able to monitor air and marine activity well into the Caribbean."

Plans are in the works to upgrade airfields in the Dutch colonies of Aruba and Curaçao to accommodate more sizable U.S. military aircraft after a ten-year pact was signed between Washington and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The agreement in El Salvador allows U.S. forces to use the Comalapa International Airport for the next decade. The U.S. military will have access to Salvadoran ports, sea lanes, air space, and various government installations, while Salvadoran authorities will not have authorization to enter U.S. installations, according to a report issued by the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico.

The U.S. rulers have also maintained a military presence in Honduras—just over 500 personnel—since 1984, when it set up a massive base of operations to organize the contra war to attempt to overthrow the workers and peasants government in Nicaragua.

In all, Wilhelm told Congress, during 1999 "we conducted more than 2,800 engagement events throughout" Latin America—military training, joint exercises, and "counterdrug" operations—that involved more than 55,000 U.S. military personnel.

Ending a ban of more than two decades against selling sophisticated U.S. weaponry in Latin America, the Clinton administration in its final days in office set in motion plans to approve the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Chile. Advisers to President George Bush said they expected him to support the sale, the final arrangements of which may take six months.

Washington hopes this move will open up further opportunities to expand these sales and joint military training operations to other countries in South America as well.

Havana marchers condemn U.S. policies

Continued from front page

Fidel Castro, armed forces minister Raúl Castro, Commanders of the Revolution Juan Almeida and Ramiro Valdés, UJC leader Otto Rivero, and Hassan Pérez, president of the Federation of University Students (FEU).

Demonstrators waved Cuban flags as they chanted, "Down with the murderous law." The focus of their protest was the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, under which the U.S. government grants legal residence to those who leave Cuba outside normal legal channels, usually by boat or raft.

Cuban citizens who make it to U.S. territory are automatically offered this status, while those picked up at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard are repatriated, under the U.S.-Cuban immigration accords signed in 1994. This is what U.S. immigration officials crudely call their "wet feet, dry feet" policy.

From 1990 to 1994, some 105,000 people emigrated from Cuba, according to academic sources. Under the 1994 agreement, Washington agreed to extend at least 20,000 visas a year to Cubans applying to emigrate. From 1995 to last December, 133,800 Cuban citizens emigrated to the United States with visas, but the number applying to emigrate has been much greater.

The U.S. Border Patrol estimates that about 1,800 Cubans reached the United States without papers last year; in 1999 the figure was 2,300. By comparison, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service reports that last year it deported 149,000 Mexicans, 4,500 Hondurans, 4,400 Salvadorans, and 4,000 Guatemalans—and even larger numbers of undocumented workers entered the United States.

Over the past several months Cuba's revolutionary leadership has been campaigning

to educate around, and mobilize opposition to, Washington's aggressive policies toward Cuba, particularly reactionary legislation such as the Cuban Adjustment Act and the Helms-Burton law. This political campaign began last year during Cuba's successful defense of its sovereignty in face of Washington's efforts to use the case of Elián González against the revolution.

Embargo provision now in Bush's lap

Meanwhile, three days before leaving office, U.S. president William Clinton issued one more six-month waiver of a law allowing Cuban-Americans and other U.S. businessmen whose property on the island was expropriated by the Cuban revolutionary government to sue companies abroad "trafficking" in those properties.

The provision is Title III of the misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act, also known as the Helms-Burton law, which Clinton signed in 1996 to tighten Washington's now four-decade-long embargo against Cuba. Under the terms of the legislation, the U.S. president may suspend this provision for six-month periods if he certifies to Congress that the suspension "is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy"—meaning capitalism—in Cuba.

In a January 18 article titled "Clinton tosses Bush a Cuba hot plantain," *Time* reporter Tony Karon noted, "President Clinton began using the waiver once the Europeans made clear that they would take the matter before the WTO [World Trade Organization], and seek retaliatory trade sanctions against the U.S." He added that "Clinton simply repeatedly postponed a confrontation by using his waiver," a tactic Washingt-

ton has used as a tool in its ongoing trade conflicts with its imperialist rivals, especially in Europe and Canada.

The latest waiver expires in July, placing in Bush's hands the decision of what action to take.

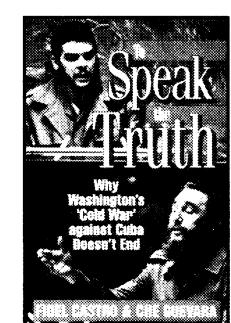
From Pathfinder

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Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

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with the First Declaration of Havana

Two declarations by the Cuban people to the oppressed and exploited throughout the Americas—each of them approved by acclamation at rallies of more than a million during the opening years of the revolution. The First Declaration of Havana, issued in September 1960, proclaims "the right of the peasants to the land; the right of the workers to the fruit of their labor; and the right of nations to nationalize the imperialist monopolies." The second declaration, from February 1962, is a call for continent-wide revolutionary struggle. "What does the Cuban revolution teach?" it asks. "That revolution is possible." Booklet \$4.50.

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Progress in sales of Pathfinder books to stores

Continued from Page 9

buyer. It starts with the preparatory work, which includes putting together a professional carrying case with sample books, catalogs, and order forms, and visiting the bookstore before the appointment to see how it's organized and what titles it carries. It reviews how to make the appointments, take orders, and complete the job, and includes a sample form to organize information and follow-up after the sales visit.

Michele Smith, one of the organizers of this effort in the Bay Area, said, "We consider it a draft and are asking for suggestions to improve it" from those involved in the work around the world.

Classroom orders increase

Pathfinder is winding up its best winter of sales for classroom use in at least four years. In December and the first three weeks of January, \$26,500 worth of books were sold to college and university bookstores as course material. This is a 25 percent increase over last year and nearly \$3,000 more than the 1997-98 season.

Many of these sales would not have been possible without the efforts of the volunteers digitizing Pathfinder books. The list of titles in use in classes across the United States reads like a partial list of the books prepared for reprint by the volunteers since they began almost three years ago.

Among the best-selling classroom titles

this year were *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, with nearly 900 copies sold, and Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* with 600 sold. Other recently digitized titles that have been adopted for classroom use include *Malcolm X on Afro-American History; Art and Revolution, Their Morals and Ours*, and *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky; *The Politics of Chicano Liberation* by Olga Rodriguez; *Fidel Castro's Political Strategy* by Marta Harneker; and *Cosmetics, Fashion and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, and Mary-Alice Waters.

A university in Miami ordered 80 copies of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, and a school in Connecticut ordered 15 copies of *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon.

Orders of 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

Pathfinder also received its second classroom order for *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes, with 32 copies ordered for a class on "Global Political Economy" at a university in Tucson, Arizona. Sixty copies were ordered in December for a class in Pennsylvania on "Values in Conflict in

the 20th Century."

The training class syllabus prepared by supporters in the San Francisco Bay Area is included in a new *Pathfinder Sales Newsletter*, the first issue of which was recently produced.

It will be used by members and supporters of the communist movement as a tool to place Pathfinder titles in bookstores and other outlets.

Contents of future issues of the newsletter will be drawn primarily from the reports, suggestions, and correspondence of those around the world who are directly involved in the work.

Supreme Court approves imprisoning people after serving sex offense sentences

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling January 17 upholding a Washington State law that requires many persons convicted of sex crimes, such as rape or child molestation, to be kept in prison even after serving their sentences.

In an 8-1 decision, the high court overturned a ruling by a federal appeals court that gave Andre Brigham Young a chance to show that his continued imprisonment, following the completion of his sentence 12 years ago, was unconstitutional.

Young, convicted of rape, has been held in the state of Washington's "Special Commitment Center" since the end of his prison term. State officials assert that the imprisonment of Young and others at the center in the custody of the state's department of social and health services, is a "civil" detention, not a criminal one.

Young charged that his confinement at the facility—in the name of "treating" him for psychiatric problems—is punitive and thus constitutes a second criminal sentence. He demanded to be released on the ground of double jeopardy—being put on trial twice for the same offense—which is prohibited by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The ruling started with the premise that Young's detention was like the civil commitment of the mentally ill. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, in the majority opinion, declared that "an act, found to be civil, cannot be deemed punitive 'as applied' to a single individual."

In a lone dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens defended Young's right to have his "detailed allegations" of double jeopardy heard. If proved, he wrote, the allegations would establish that those detained after serving their sentences "are treated like those imprisoned for violations of Washington's criminal laws, but that, in many respects, they receive significantly worse treatment."

Beginning in 1990 a number of states began adopting "civil commitment" laws for sex offenders, usually justifying their moves by seizing on a gruesome crime as depicting those arrested as "sexual predators." Such laws now exist in 16 states.

Some defenders of civil liberties have opposed such measures, explaining that they represent unconstitutional punishment of people who have already served out their sentences.

In 1997 the Supreme Court ruled that a Kansas law modeled on the Washington law imposed "civil confinement" and was not double jeopardy. That ruling, however, left open the possibility that a prisoner could argue that the application of the law was in fact punitive. The ruling on Young's case all but closed that door.

Of the 894 people involuntarily committed to psychiatric hospitals after serving out sentences for sex crimes, only 44 have been judged "cured" by authorities and released. The "cure" often involves the person "owning up" to the charges for which they were convicted and being subjected to other degrading conditions.

A recent *Washington Post* article reported that, as "alternatives" to post-prison detainment, some state governments are using 24-hour satellite tracking of those who have completed their sentences or regular, compulsory lie-detector tests.

Under the tracking program, the *Post* reported, the person on parole is required to wear an anklet that cannot be removed and is attached to a small satellite transmitter. A private satellite-monitoring company, contracted by the state, notifies authorities "if the criminal is not where he is supposed to be—for example, at work by 8 a.m."

The polygraph tests, the article further explains, "help agents probe the minds of sexual predators, eliciting honest answers to questions about improper thoughts" or activities the authorities deem threatening.

from Pathfinder

Read

'Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation'

by Larry Seigle

in **New International No. 6**

Other articles include

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Protest Immigration Raids in Nebraska, Defend Workers' Rights. Speakers: Edwin Fruit, meat packer from Perry, Iowa, correspondent for the *Militant*; and José Oliva, Interfaith Committee on Workers Issues. Sat., Feb. 3, 7:00 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

NEW YORK

Upper Manhattan

Defend the Right of a Woman to Choose Abortion. Fri., Jan 26, 7:30 p.m.

What's Behind the Energy Crisis. Fri., Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.

Both events to be held at 540 W. 165th St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

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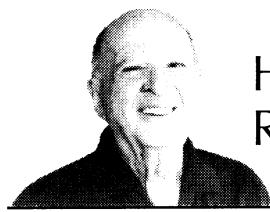
Federation and Australian Imperialism: A Communist View. Speaker: Doug Cooper, Communist League, member of Maritime Union of Australia. Fri., Feb. 2, 7:00 p.m. 1st floor, 176 Redfern St., Redfern. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9690 1522.

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London

The Fight Against Job Cuts in the Car Industry. Fri., Feb. 2, 7:00 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

Tender, loving HMOs—In a *New York Times* interview, Leonard Schaeffer, top dog at Wellpoint



Harry
Ring

Health Networks, offers pious advice on how to deal with the public scorn of such profit-gougers as HMOs. "Be in a business," he declares with a straight face, "that has a purpose and inspires employees."

Set clear and elevating goals."

Int'l banditry—You think grand larceny at the gasoline pump or energy meter is peculiar to your state or to the USA? Check out this recent headline from the *Times* of London: "Anger as oil giants triple pump profits." The story includes a cartoon of a man at a pump, phone in hand, saying, "Police, I'd like to report a robbery."

Time-tested capitalist priorities—"Multiple sclerosis sufferers will have to wait six months to discover whether they can get two new drugs from the [United Kingdom's] National Health Service. The National Institute for Clinical Excel-

lence will not decide before July whether [the two drugs] are cost effective."—The *Times*. London.

School days—Two classrooms in New York's East Bronx were slated to reopen this month after being shut down last fall. Students had complained of a foul stench in the two rooms.

Health workers determined that the odor came from mold on the walls, the product of rain seeping through leaky ceilings. To make do, two bus-shaped mobile "classrooms" were parked on a heavily trafficked street outside the school. The principal says they may be kept there to cope with overcrowding.

Brass Heads Inc.—"An Army of One." That's the slogan dreamed up by a Chicago ad agency as the centerpiece of a fresh batch of Army recruiting hype. It replaces the slogan, "Be all you can be." The new slogan is intended (How? Don't ask us.) to respond to the finding that youth see Army life as dehumanizing.

Which is which?—"The U.S. Justice Department is issuing stricter guidelines for handling underworld informants—rules prompted by allegations that FBI agents in Boston [Just Boston?] were overly cozy with mobsters."—News item.

Taking care of business—The

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is "considering" listing a Nevada mine as a Superfund cleanup site. The former Anaconda copper mine has been leaking toxins into area drinking water. A demand for federal action was pressed by two Paiute tribes that say state officials have refused to act for 20 years.

Who do they think they are, senators?—Lawyers for Mississippi's lieutenant governor told the state supreme court there was no need for it to intervene in a state legislature tussle over a demand by senators who are Black that bills be read before a final vote on them.

Why working people should oppose nuclear power

Printed below are excerpts from *What Working People Should Know about the Dangers of Nuclear Power*, by Fred Halstead. The pamphlet was written shortly after the 1979 near-meltdown of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which was followed by protests demanding the closing of all nuclear plants. The United Mine Workers union played a prominent role in the protests. Copyright © 1979 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY FRED HALSTEAD

Nuclear power's special danger to health, safety, and even life itself can be summed up in one word: *radiation*.

Nuclear radiation has a certain mystery about it, partly because it cannot be detected by human senses. It can't be seen or heard, or touched or tasted, even though it may be all around us. There are other things like that. Radio waves, for example. They are all around us but we can't detect them, sense

selves, you may be in trouble. They reproduce themselves in a deformed way. They can grow into cancer. Sometimes this does not show up for many years.

This is another reason for some of the mystery about nuclear radiation. Serious damage can be done without the victim being aware at the time that damage has occurred. A person can be irradiated and feel fine, then die of cancer five, ten, or twenty years later as a result. Or a child can be born weak or prone to serious illness as a result of radiation absorbed by its grandparents.

All the more reason the truth about radiation produced by nuclear power and nuclear weapons plants should be told. Working people should understand all that is known about it. It is too serious a matter to be trusted to company-controlled safety people and company dominated government agencies.

For military, profit, and political reasons, the nuclear industry and the government have for many years carried on a campaign to obscure the facts and confuse the public about the real dangers of radiation. That is another reason for the mystery surrounding it. They don't want us to know the truth....

There is only one way to protect people from the cancer and genetic damage caused by nuclear power plants, from the possibility of catastrophic accidents at these plants, and from the continued and growing accumulation of deadly radioactive waste which cannot be stored safely.

That is to shut down all the nuclear power plants immediately....It is possible to shut down the nuclear power plants immediately without disrupting the economy or interfering with the growth of industry. How is this possible in the short term, before other alternatives are developed? The answer is a four-letter word, *coal*.

Coal as the immediate alternative

By using more coal, we could shut down all nuclear power plants this year, and still leave ourselves a comfortable margin of electrical generating capacity in reserve....

Coal does not involve the possibility of catastrophic accidents wiping out whole states. Coal does not involve the problem of either low-level or high level radioactive wastes. Industry operated on coal for decades and it never threatened to wipe out the human race.

Moreover, techniques already exist and are in use in many places to remove almost all of the worst pollutants from coal emissions....

Ten years ago, before many of the problems with nuclear power were widely understood, the government and nuclear industry were projecting as many as a thousand major nuclear power plants in the United States by the end of the century. But, by the time of President [James] Carter's first State of the Union message in 1977, that figure had been cut to 300. Today, in 1981, the number being spoken of is less than 100, with 73 of those already completed....

The energy corporations have already invested some \$150 billion in the existing nuclear plants and those that are already in



Demonstration against Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 8, 1979.

some stage of construction. They want to use these plants until they get their money back. They also want to use them to reduce the power of the United Mine Workers union.

In addition, the suppliers of components for nuclear plants are hoping to recoup their investments by exporting nuclear plants

overseas to underdeveloped countries. Since they can't sell them in the U.S. anymore, they are trying to palm off a bad investment on these countries. However, they know that if the American people put a stop to nuclear power here, this shell game will be exposed and it will become very difficult to sell these monsters anywhere....

It is therefore of historic importance that a significant section of American labor—with the United Mine Workers up front—is taking the lead in the fight for safe energy and full employment and for ridding the country of the nuclear menace. The labor movement and its allies in the rest of the population can solve this big problem. They can solve it because unlike the capitalists, they have an interest in doing so. Labor's jobs do not depend on nuclear power; on the contrary, they depend on the development of safe energy. And the working class must

be concerned about the general health of the population and the future of all our children.

Sooner or later the labor movement and its allies—the working farmers, students, and so on—must take political power in their own hands in order to resolve this problem as well as others in the interests of the common people.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 6, 1976

BOSTON—The antibusing movement here, spearheaded by the violent city-wide action of racist high school students, has dealt court-ordered desegregation—and the very safety of Boston's Black students—the biggest blows since mob attacks met the start of busing in the fall of 1974.

Schools remain tense in the wake of a week of disruptions in which white students and some white parents waged a virtual war on Black students at Hyde Park High School.

Bat- and pipe-wielding thugs roamed school corridors and grounds in search of Black students after two days of provocations that led to the explosion.

On January 19, under the guise of "retaliation" for the burning of an American flag by a Black student, the school's racist youth put out the word that "the niggers are going to get it."

On January 20, gangs of white students jumped individual Black students, sometimes as many as ten whites cornered and beating one Black youth.

Fighting spilled outside the building at the dismissal of school, as a tiny police force was unable—and unwilling—to stop the racists from going after Black students with hockey sticks. A mob of nearly 100 whites tried unsuccessfully to board a bus carrying Black students, after they had shattered windows and rocked the vehicle.

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February 5, 1951

Unless Nehru's government agrees to obey the orders of the U.S. State Department in the UN, the Indian people will be left to starve to death by the scores of millions—that was the ultimatum which Capitol Hill served last week on New Delhi when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee pigeon-holed India's "request to send two million tons of American grain to that famine threatened country."

No action will be taken on this "request" until the sub-committee "looks into the whole question of U.S. relations with India," announced Sen. Connally, Chairman of this powerful Senate body.

The American imperialists and all their apologists have always found it "reasonable" to use the plight of hungry peoples in order to bludgeon their governments into submission. Relief measures—from loans to promises of food shipments—have long been used by these philanthropists as blackmail to extort economic and political concessions. India is just one case—the most flagrant one next to that of Yugoslavia—of the brutal pressure the American imperialists are bringing to bear upon every reluctant member in the U.N.

The Nehru government has been cajoled with one promise after another of food. Washington has of course, made a public show of its "humanitarianism"!

'Sex offender' ruling targets rights

A blow was dealt to the democratic rights of all working people with the January 17 U.S. Supreme Court ruling to uphold a state law that allows authorities to keep some people convicted of sex crimes locked up even after they serve out the prison terms for those charges.

The court justified this unconstitutional extension of incarceration by calling it "civil"—as opposed to "criminal"—confinement for medical "treatment." Under these programs, prison authorities arbitrarily decide whether and when to release a person. This amounts to maintaining a person in prison without new charges, trial, or the right to appeal.

The so-called treatment administered to individuals who have completed their sentences for sex offenses has nothing to do with medical care. It is "behavior modification" imposed involuntarily, often forcing individuals to "own up" to the charges on which they were convicted. It is degrading and punitive—sometimes more than the previous prison sentence, as even the lone dissenting Supreme Court judge acknowledged.

Capitalist politicians have pressed for such undemocratic measures in the name of combating sexual abuse. They seize on the justified abhorrence by working people for the abuse of women and children, whip up fear and emotional energy, and use this to try to gain our acceptance for undermining democratic rights. The rulers seek an easy target in order to soften the widespread resistance among working people to government attacks on basic

rights such as due process and protection from arbitrary seizure. These measures open the way for broader attacks.

The U.S. rulers have so far made limited progress in their steady offensive against democratic rights. Attacks in the guise of targeting "sex offenders" are one of the areas where they have made more inroads over the past two decades. Sixteen states now have laws on the books similar to the Washington State law upheld by the Supreme Court. Of 894 people involuntarily committed to psychiatric hospitals after serving out sentences for sex crimes, only 44 have been released, after being deemed "cured" by the jailers and social engineers.

Other measures used by state governments, such as imposing ankle bracelet "transmitters," 24-hour satellite tracking, and frequent polygraph testing of former prisoners while they are on parole are part of these encroachments on democratic rights.

In addition, a 1996 federal law passed in Congress and signed by Clinton requires state authorities to publish lists of persons convicted of sex offenses after their release from prison. This means those who have served their sentences are often subjected to public hounding fanned by capitalist politicians, cops, and rightists.

If the U.S. rulers get away with these unconstitutional moves, they will undoubtedly probe measures to arbitrarily lock up or curb the rights of other categories of people who have served out prison sentences. It is in the interests of all workers and farmers to oppose this latest attack.

Washington's massacre in Korea

With imperial arrogance, the U.S. government has refused to acknowledge its responsibility for the cold-blooded killings of hundreds of Korean civilians ordered by the U.S. military brass in 1950, during the Korean War, and has also rejected providing financial compensation demanded by the survivors of the massacre.

Some 50 years later, however, Washington and the capitalist regime in south Korea have been unable to maintain their cover-up of this U.S. atrocity. If William Clinton felt compelled to acknowledge that U.S. troops had indeed shot down Korean civilians fleeing the war zone in No Gun Ri—while absolving the military brass—it is only because survivors and relatives of the victims refused to keep quiet about the U.S. military's brutal assault. They courageously fought for nearly half a century to bring the truth about the slaughter to light.

A public airing of the facts shows working people around the world that its Washington who was and is the aggressor on the Korean peninsula. The Korean people have struggled for decades for national liberation, first against Japanese colonial rule and then, since World War II, against U.S. imperialist domination. As a result of massive revolutionary struggles, workers and peasants overthrew capitalist rule in the northern part of their country—a blow to Washington and a victory for working people worldwide.

In response to deep-going land reform, nationalization

of industry, and other deep-going social measures in the north, which offered an example to workers and farmers in the south, the U.S. rulers waged a bloody war against the Korean people from 1950 to 1953, resulting in the deaths of more than 3 million Koreans and the destruction of cities, factories, and mines as a result of Washington's saturation bombings.

The war ended in a defeat for U.S. imperialism, which failed to crush the workers state in the north. But today Washington maintains Korea as a divided nation, with its 37,000 occupation troops deployed in the southern half of the peninsula. Washington's nuclear-tipped military missiles are aimed at Korean workers and peasants in the south as well as the north.

But the aspiration for national reunification and sovereignty is deep and growing among millions throughout Korea, who have continued to press for their demands in many ways. The fight to expose the massacre at No Gun Ri is part of this resistance, as was the march last year by thousands of villagers in south Korea who demanded U.S. troops get out of their country and close down the U.S. bombing range.

Working people in this country should support the fight for Korea's reunification and demand that Washington remove all its troops and weaponry from Korea, as well as compensate the survivors of the U.S.-organized No Gun Ri massacre.

Alabama: workers protest gas cutoff

Continued from Page 5

or with huge gas bills. She pointed to the need for working people "to demand the federal and state government provide immediate relief. No one should have their gas turned off in the dead of winter."

FitzMaurice also argued for the labor movement waging a fight for the nationalization of the energy monopolies. Pointing to the crisis in California—with layoffs, farmers faced with ruin, and skyrocketing utility prices—she said, "The energy companies should be taken out of private hands and run as public utilities for the benefit of working people rather than the wealthy capitalists and bankers." Workers in the energy industry could play a vital role in opening the companies' books and monitoring production.

She pointed out that there was a plentiful supply of power all around them: coal. "Coal can be mined safely and provide jobs—if there's UMWA protection—and the technology exists to burn it cleanly if the power companies would spend the money to purchase the proper equipment." FitzMaurice and others at the meeting distributed a flier urging attendance at a Militant Labor Forum to discuss what working people do to address the energy crisis.

At the meeting's conclusion, Tony LaDu announced that he is forming a community committee to "find someone in government to listen to us."

Jacob Fox is a surface coal miner in Alabama.

CORRECTION

In last week's issue, the lead paragraph in the article titled "Debate flares up around Bush appointees" inadvertently left out a few words. The paragraph should have read: "Partisan infighting between Democrats and Republicans has flared up around the nominations by president-elect George W. Bush for several key cabinet posts. They include figures who have outspoken records opposing abortion rights and affirmative action, in favor of the death penalty and ending restrictions on corporate plundering of the environment, and other reactionary positions."

Democrats and the vote count in Florida

BY GREG McCARTAN

Millions of working people across the country correctly sense that the new administration of George Bush, together with Congress, will push ahead with further assaults on gains workers and farmers have made through struggle. Although there have been some partisan conflicts over Bush's cabinet nominees, most if not all are likely to be approved by the U.S. Senate, with large numbers of Democrats voting in favor.

Bush has placed in key posts politicians whose record is one of opposing government policies, laws, and regulations that in many cases codify gains in struggle by workers, farmers, women, and oppressed nationalities. In his inaugural address Bush said he will press to "reform Social Security and Medicare," code words for the continued bipartisan drive to undercut working people's social wage. In his first few days in office, Bush reinstated

REPLY TO A READER

a policy of barring federal funds for organizations that perform abortions or raise abortion as a choice for women.

Why this is happening and how the Bush administration got into office are important questions because they involve an assessment of politics in this country, including what is happening in the U.S. ruling class and the political parties that represent them, the Democrats and Republicans.

Some among the liberal wings of the Democratic Party claim Bush stole the election from Gore. Many radical and "socialist" organizations echo this bourgeois demagogic. For example, the *People's Weekly World*, newspaper of the Communist Party USA, ran a front-page headline declaring that there had been an "American coup" by right-wing forces against the candidate they urged working people to vote for, Democrat Gore.

In his letter to the editor on the facing page, Edwin Fruitt takes exception to a sentence in an article I wrote on the outcome of the election that says Democratic presidential candidate Albert Gore tried to steal the election from Bush. Fruitt points to the various ways the rights of working people in the election were violated, most importantly through the standard racist practices and violations of voting rights. The *Militant* is giving coverage and support to the protests and the NAACP lawsuit against these outrages (see news coverage on opposite page).

The violations of voting rights exposed in Florida happen in every state of the union; Florida came under the spotlight mainly because of the extraordinarily close election there. From the point of view of working people, a "truly fair election" cannot occur as long as the superwealthy capitalist minority run society. First, the ruling class will not allow the working class to gain political power through elections if such a prospect is posed. History has left no doubt: they will defend their state through force and violence when needed. The capitalists always use their power and resources to make sure that politicians acceptable to them are chosen. These methods include not only undemocratic laws that prevent working people from getting on the ballot or gaining media access, but sometimes take the form of undemocratic electoral maneuvers in squabbles among capitalist politicians themselves. And let's not forget that U.S. elections have been marked by the low percentages of people who vote. Gore and Bush each received around 24 percent of the eligible vote, not a figure the self-proclaimed representatives of U.S. "democracy" can brag about.

Within this framework of an election under bourgeois democracy in the United States today, Gore was trying to change the outcome and steal the victory from Bush. When the questions of who would be president came down to the vote in Florida, and it seemed likely Bush would win a slim majority of the electoral vote, Gore and his campaign staff began to try to find a way to justify a hand recount in several heavily Democratic counties to boost his overall numbers. He couldn't care less about a principle of "counting every vote."

Gore never asked for a full hand recount in Florida. Several commentators in the big-business media wrote after the Supreme Court ruling that this was a big tactical error by Gore. A December 13 *New York Times* article expressed the view that "Gore's failure to ask the Florida courts for a manual statewide recount has emerged as one in a series of pivotal legal miscalculations," noting that "Mr. Gore's lawyers never once pursued it in court even though they were invited to do just that during oral arguments before the Florida Supreme Court." Bush and the Republicans tried to prevent in court any moves that would give Gore the advantage. And they won out.

Stealing elections is not an uncommon practice in U.S. politics. For example, it is widely accepted in bourgeois circles that the election of John Kennedy to the White House in 1960—also an extremely close election—was possible because of ballot box stuffing in Chicago by the Democratic machine headed by Mayor Richard Daley. To clearly state what Gore was up to, especially in the midst of the loud campaign by Democrats and radical groups to

Continued on Page 12

Philippines president forced to step down

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Philippines president Joseph Estrada resigned January 20, increasingly isolated in the face of widespread opposition to his government. During the three days before his resignation, hundreds of thousands of people poured into the streets of the capital Manila, chanting for the president to resign.

Estrada's fate was sealed by the declaration of support for Vice president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo by the chief of the armed forces. Major business representatives and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church had already added their voices to the opposition's drive to oust Estrada.

Washington stated its support for the new government headed by Arroyo, who had resigned from Estrada's cabinet October 12. Both the capitalist class and their imperialist masters view her as better qualified than Estrada to serve their interests. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Arroyo, the daughter of a former president, "was backed in part by big business and some of the landed Philippine families that control most of the nation's companies and wealth."

Estrada had been elected in May 1998 with a large majority. He campaigned around "law and order" themes, saying he would enforce the laws against criminals and corrupt politicians "without fear or favor." One campaign slogan read, "Elect Erap as President of the Masses." The approach proved effective, even though Estrada is in



January 19 demonstration in Manila calls for ouster of President Joseph Estrada, with generals and opposition politicians in foreground. He resigned the next day.

fact a veteran of more than 30 years' involvement in politics, having served as mayor of the San Juan suburb of Manila, a member of the senate, and as vice president under Fidel Ramos for six years from 1992.

As president, Estrada pursued economic policies in line with the dictates of the International Monetary Fund. His government

promoted legislation "opening up the country's economic potential to companies from the United States and all over the world," in the words of one official statement. IMF officials, representing the interests of imperialist investors, kept the pressure up by making the release of promised loans conditional on such measures.

Bush inauguration marked by protests; Florida march opposes voting rights abuse

BY MIKE ITALIE

TALLAHASSEE, Florida—The fight against violations of the voting rights of Blacks, Haitian-Americans, and others in Florida during the November 7 presidential election was a central theme of a January 20 National Day of Outrage here, timed to coincide with the inauguration of George Bush as U.S. president.

The largely Black, working-class crowd, marched from the Tallahassee Civic Center to the State Capitol in order to focus attention on the unresolved violations of democratic rights. Many had been among the thousands who rallied here on March 7, 2000, to protest Florida governor John Ellis Bush's "One Florida Initiative" aimed at gutting affirmative action.

NAACP president Kweisi Mfume joined with other speakers in describing the election of George Bush as "illegitimate," but focused his remarks on the refusal of the Clinton administration to respond to concerns the civil rights organization began raising before election day.

Three days prior to the vote, Mfume said that the NAACP learned of thousands of calls being made around Florida urging a vote for Bush by people falsely claiming to represent the NAACP. By 2:00 p.m. on election day the NAACP had received 250 complaints from people in Florida concerning checkpoints set up by police near voting centers in Black neighborhoods, election officials turning registered voters away at the polls, and other violations.

Mfume said every time the NAACP presented this evidence to the Justice Department the administration "just looked the other way. Then three weeks after the election, the Justice Department sent two people to check the situation for the entire state of Florida, and they decided no further investigation was necessary." The NAACP has filed a lawsuit to press its case.

Some 1,500 people turned out for the protest, organized by the Coalition of Conscience, headed by Operation Push and Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson. Widespread support for the Democratic Party was evident in the number of signs stating, "I've Been Bush-whacked," "Hail to the Thief," and "Gore/Lieberman."

The largest contingents were from the NAACP, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Charles Brave, Jr., and Leonard Riley were among a dozen dockworkers and members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) from Charleston, South Carolina, who marched with their union banner. One year ago hun-

dreds of dockworkers in Charleston protesting the use of nonunion labor were viciously attacked by the police

Brave explained that he is among 27 workers facing a civil suit filed by a dock company charging workers damaged its property during their resistance to the police attack. In addition, five workers are under indictment on "riot" charges. Their trial is expected to take place at the end of February. Messages of support and donations can be sent to: Dockworkers Defense Fund, 910 Morrison Dr., Charleston, S.C., 29403.

Mike Italie is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 415 in Miami.

❖

BY JANE LYONS

WASHINGTON—Thousands rallied at six different sites along the route of George Bush's motorcade on the day of his inauguration as U.S. president January 20. The mostly youthful crowds carried signs and shouted slogans against the death penalty, police brutality, and destruction of environment, and in support of women's rights. Others carried signs and wore buttons reading "Hail to the Thief," referring to their belief that the Republican Party stole the election from Democrat Albert Gore.

There were contingents calling for an end to the U.S. Navy's use of the Puerto Rican Island of Vieques for bombing practice, in support of the Palestinian struggle, an end to sanctions against Iraq, and for U.S. troops to get out of Korea.

Tom Gillespie, a letter carrier from Virginia, came to the protest on his own and

joined the largest of the rallies at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. He saw a difference between Bush and Democrat Gore, who he said was "the lesser of two evils." Gillespie said he was mostly concerned about "union issues and staying out of other nations' affairs and not dictating how they should act, especially Cuba."

Jim Obanion, 29, from Chicago said he came "to raise a voice for reproductive rights and gay rights." Laurie Auld, a waitress and social worker from Pittsburgh, said, "I see no difference between the two. I came to support workers' rights and the rights of the poor. We need a livable wage."

At the other side of the city, some 1,000 demonstrators marched to the Supreme Court in a "shadow inauguration" to protest the disenfranchisement of African-American voters. Among the participants were protesters who came on eight buses from Detroit organized by the NAACP. Several hundred supporters of the National Organization for Women held signs at another site in support of abortion rights. NOW president Patricia Ireland also addressed a rally of 1,000 that focused on "election reforms," such as calling for the abolition of the Electoral College and changes in campaign financing.

A few hundred opponents of a woman's right to choose abortion, under the auspices of the Christian Defense Coalition, also demonstrated along the parade route. The January 20th weekend marked the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that decriminalized abortion. Prochoice activists organized early-morning clinic defense to keep Washington area clinics open in face of yearly attempts by rightists to prevent patient's access to them. Abortion rights opponents did not attempt to close any of the clinics this year.

The new government has given no indication that it will reverse this course. The finance minister in the new government, former senator Alberto Romulo, said on his appointment that "he would try to regain the confidence of jittery foreign investors, who abandoned Philippine markets in droves in recent weeks," according to the *New York Times*. Foreign investors also reportedly withdrew \$390 million from the Philippines economy in the first eight months of 2000.

In spite of a growth rate of around 4 percent last year and an expansion in exports, the recovery in the Philippines economy following the 1997–98 Asian financial crash and economic crisis has not kept pace with that seen among other semicolonial nations in the region.

Economic dependency

The country's economy, in which agriculture and light industry predominate, is heavily dependent on investors and markets in the United States, Japan, and other imperialist countries. More than one-third of exports go to the United States. Markets in Western Europe take an equal amount. U.S. and Japanese firms are responsible for 22 percent and 20 percent respectively of the country's imports.

The country's currency has fallen in value from about 38 pesos to the dollar at the end of 1998 to 54 pesos today. The Philippines stock market also took a beating in the last year, reaching a 16-month low in April. At the start of that year the total foreign debt stood at \$52 billion, or more than 75 percent of the annual gross domestic product.

One-third of working people live below the official poverty line, earning no more than \$1 a day. Official unemployment, which understates the real figure, had risen to more than 13 percent by August of last year, up from 8.4 percent in July 1999. One Philippines businessman described the country as a "thin layer of rich and successful people floating in an ocean of absolute poverty."

Against this background of economic polarization and uncertainty, Estrada was increasingly depicted as ineffective and incompetent by his political opponents. In October, impeachment proceedings were launched in the House of Representatives, accusing Estrada of graft, of accepting bribes, and of violating the country's constitution. Protests numbering in the tens of thousands demanding Estrada's resignation were organized.

Mobilizations in the streets called

Events sped up after January 16, when a narrow vote in the Senate halted the impeachment proceedings. As the head of the impeachment court and other prosecutors resigned in protest, the opposition leaders called for more street mobilizations.

Among those joining the actions were forces in the labor and student movements. Working people joined the opposition protests in large numbers. One construction worker told reporters, "All that's left to do now is to put Estrada in jail."

On the day of Estrada's resignation, former presidents both Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos were joined by military officers, ruling-class politicians, and Cardinal Jaime Sin in front of the jubilant crowds.

The U.S. embassy in Manila released a statement welcoming the new head of state. "We have had an exceptionally strong working relationship with new President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in the past, and are looking forward to working with her to strengthen U.S.-Philippine relations even further," it read.

LETTERS

Why say Gore stole election?

I would like to comment on the article by Greg McCartan entitled "Bush will continue bipartisan antilabor course" in the January 8 issue of the *Militant*.

In the article, McCartan says, "When the November 7 vote total in Florida turned out to be close enough to require an automatic machine recount, the Gore camp began looking for a way to steal the election from Bush." McCartan explained that recounts were asked for in three heavily Democratic counties rather than the entire state.

Using the formulation "steal the election" makes the Republicans look like victims here.

I would say that both the Democrats and

Republicans are responsible for "stealing" the election from the U.S. electorate. Working-class candidates were denied access to the ballot and the media across the country. In Florida 30 percent of all Black men are permanently barred from voting because of felony convictions, and in the nation as a whole some 4.2 million citizens fall into this category. The obstacles, abuse, and other voting rights violations faced by Blacks, Haitian-Americans, and Latinos in Florida has been challenged by the NAACP.

Both parties are responsible for the above examples of denying people the democratic right to know what all the choices were and to be able to vote on their convictions. We will never know what the outcome of the

election would have been had a truly fair election occurred. The Republicans accused the Democrats of trying to change the "legitimate" outcome of the Florida vote. Using the term "steal the election" lets the Republicans off the hook.

*Edwin Fruitt
Des Moines, Iowa*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

UK troops intervene in Sierra Leone

BY PHIL WATERHOUSE

LONDON—More than 100 troops from the Royal Air Force parachuted into Lungi airport in the Sierra Leone capital Freetown January 13 as part of London's deepening military intervention in the African country. The exercise was backed up by a display of firepower from a British gunboat stationed off the coast.

Brig. Gen. Jonathan Riley told the press that British troops will stay in Sierra Leone until the war against the opposition Revolutionary Union Front (RUF) "is either won or resolved on favorable terms." Britain is beefing up its role as a United Nations-backed military force is scheduled to be reduced by 2,000 troops this month.

In addition to the 600 British troops in Sierra Leone, including 350 Gurkhas, London has told the UN it will keep 5,000 more soldiers "over the horizon" ready for rapid deployment. The British government has refused to join the UN force, which has been made up primarily of troops from India and Jordan.

The gunboat HMS *Iron Duke*, with a company of 185, will remain in Sierra Leone's territorial waters for the foreseeable future. Since last September London has engaged rebel forces, organized an amphibious landing by marines with helicopter support, conducted two days of live-fire jungle training, and carried out six-week training courses for the army of the current government.

Britain and the UN are backing the current regime in Sierra Leone against the RUF, an armed opposition group that currently controls a large part of the country, including rich diamond fields. The group once held power in Sierra Leone after ousting the regime of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who was backed by Britain. The RUF carried out extensive brutal attacks against the population and was driven out of the capital by Nigerian troops in 1998.

After Kabbah was reinstalled as president, he invited the UN and British troops in. These forces have already come into conflict with working people in Sierra Leone. On November 5, Nigerian troops—part of the UN military force—together with local police, opened fire to disperse youths protesting against a dusk-to-dawn curfew. The youths built barricades and demanded the right to mobilize to protect their neighbor-



British Royal Marines land on beach in Sierra Leone. London plans to keep gunboat HMS Iron Duke, with company of 185, off Sierra Leone's coast for foreseeable future.

hood against armed gangs. The troops halted their attempt to march to the city center.

The rebel force has agreed to begin opening areas under its control and turning in its weapons. Britain has pushed the UN to more

aggressively move into rebel-held territory.

London, together with its imperialist ally in Washington, has been campaigning against what it has termed "blood diamond" exports from Sierra Leone and other Afri-

can countries. The diamond-producing region of Sierra Leone is controlled by RUF forces.

Britain says that since these products are "war diamonds" allegedly smuggled out through Liberia, Gambia, and the Ivory Coast—outside of the control of the international diamond cartel controlled by the De Beers family—they should be banned from the market.

British foreign secretary Robin Cook put it succinctly when he declared last November, "The real proof of the rebel's commitment to peace will be whether they give up control of the diamond fields."

According to the *Financial Times*, the UN Security Council is expected to impose sanctions against the government of Charles Taylor in Liberia, including seizing "assets belonging to Mr. Taylor and his regime" and banning diamond and timber exports.

A meeting of the World Diamond Congress in London this week will propose the U.S. ban imports of these "illegal" diamonds and urge Congress to pass prompt legislation. Former U.S. national security adviser Sandy Berger has urged the White House to back such measures. Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain has pledged full support from the British government for any proposed sanctions.

U.S. official 'urges' African nations to quit the Non-Aligned Movement

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—Washington's outgoing ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke, has advised African nations to quit the Non-Aligned Movement.

The arrogant instruction from the Clinton administration came during a January 17 meeting in New York with African ambassadors. "I respectfully ask the African countries to reconsider their association with the Non-Aligned Movement," Holbrooke said. "[It] is not Africa's friend at this point. Your goals and the [movement's] are not synonymous."

Close to 1 billion face hunger

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The United Nations World Food Program reported that 830 million people in the world are suffering from hunger. More than 95 percent live in underdeveloped countries. Nearly a quarter are children under five years old. The January 8 report defines hunger as a situation in which an adult subsists on 1,800 calories or less daily. The average adult needs 2,100 calories a day to maintain health.

Officials of the World Food Program (WFP) said that the situation described in the report, based on figures collected from 1995 to 1997, has not improved and in some places is getting worse. The report blames much of this on drought and war, rather than the effects of the deepening social crisis caused by capitalism and its impact in the semicolonial world. The study's harsh figures highlight the denial of basic needs to hundreds of millions around the globe.

In more than 20 countries drought conditions have affected 100 million people over the past year, compounding the effects of malnutrition.

The most severe situation exists in sub-Saharan Africa, where 180 million people—one-third of the population—is undernourished. Most seriously affected are Angola, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

The World Food Program's web site reports that in Western Sudan "wells, dams, and entire rivers have run dry on an unprecedented scale." As a result, "over 3.2 mil-

lion Sudanese are facing serious food and water shortages due to the combined disruptions" of war and drought. Food prices in the drought areas have increased three-fold. The WFP reports that it is providing food aid to a little over half of those needing help.

In the Horn of Africa more than 14 million peoples' lives are threatened by drought and famine. Ethiopia is hardest hit, with 10.5 million affected. Ethiopia suffered from droughts in 1973, 1984, and 1991, but this episode is the harshest.

The greatest number of malnourished people live in Asia, where 17 percent of the population or 525 million people are affected.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 53 million people—11 percent of the population—lack adequate food. Haiti, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Honduras are most affected. Hurricane Mitch caused severe damage in Nicaragua and Honduras in 1998.

In Iraq, where Washington under the auspices of the United Nations has maintained a crippling economic embargo since the 1990–91 Gulf War, an estimated 15 percent of the population is suffering from hunger.

In the Balkans and particularly in Serbia, according to the WFP report, many people are "grappling with spiraling food prices and economic hardship." In December the WFP initiated an emergency program to feed nearly 1 million people in the Balkans. U.S. and NATO forces carried out massive bombings of Yugoslavia in 1994–1995 and 1999.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which first met in 1961, is a forum grouping 113 governments, the great majority from semicolonial nations oppressed by imperialism in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Among its members are several countries where capitalist property relations have been overturned, such as Cuba, Vietnam, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Others are targets of U.S. aggression, including Libya, Iran, and Sudan.

The Non-Aligned Movement has been a thorn in Washington's side. It has consistently called for an end to the U.S. embargo of Cuba; stood in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for a homeland; and supported the Korean people's fight for unification.

Its members have at times acted as a bloc within the UN in their own interests. The organization has also opposed specific actions taken by the U.S. government that trample on national sovereignty. For example, its 12th summit, held in Durban, South Africa, in September 1998, denounced "the continuing threats made by the U.S. government against the Sudan" and condemned the U.S. missile attack two weeks earlier on Al Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant in Khartoum.

Holbrooke, who has postured as a "friend" of Africa, declared, "I have not seen any single issue that NAM has served African interest." He urged those present to "think of Africa and don't get used for other people's battles."

Most African diplomats quoted in the press rejected this advice. Jeanette Ndlovu of South Africa, who currently holds the group's rotating presidency, said the body has "been in the forefront of seeking to address and redress many African problems, including debt relief and drawing foreign direct investment. So those comments are not in line with reality as we perceive it. We are committed to the [movement] and to its agenda."

Algerian ambassador Abdallah Baali "totally disagreed" with Holbrooke. "I don't see any country in Africa today breaking with the [movement]. It's something I can't imagine."

However, the U.S. diplomat's speech did find at least one sympathetic listener. "All he is saying as a friend of Africa is that Africa should now look at itself. We must listen to what he is saying," said Nigerian UN ambassador Arthur Mbanefo.

African governments, Holbrooke stated, "should consider distancing yourself from [the movement] so you can protect African interests and not allow yourself to be pushed by less than 10 radicalized states in positions that you don't need." He declared that "you weaken your voice...by associating with a group that is dominated by non-African radicals."

While Holbrooke named no specific "radicals," Public Enemy Number One in Washington's eyes has been, and remains, the government of revolutionary Cuba. Through the meetings and statements of the Non-Aligned Movement, Cuban leaders have helped raise a voice in defense of the interests of the majority of the world's population, overwhelmingly workers and peasants, who reside in countries that belong to this organization. They have sought to forge diplomatic unity among the semicolonial governments in opposition to imperialism.

"There is no need for the Movement to apologize or ask anyone's permission to exist and continue fighting," Cuban president Fidel Castro told the Non-Aligned summit in 1998. "Even the United States earnestly requested to attend this meeting as a guest—so be it. It's better that way, so that the great empire may learn how its modest subjects feel."

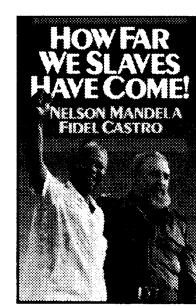
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